

MELBOURNE.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.



BY

THE AUTHOR OF DELORAINE.

Fortune sometimes assumes a rugged brow,
But to endear her smiles, and make the turn
More welcome to us, as 'tis unexpected.—
How sweet is rest after a toilsome day!
How pleasant light after a length of darkness!
How relishing good fortune after ill!

HAYARD.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PRINTED AT THE
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FOR WILLIAM LANE, LEADENHALL-STREET.
1798.

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A NOVEL.

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BY

THE AUTHOR OF "MORRIS."

—*—

Fortune sometimes smiles a rugged brow,
But to render her smiles and make the sun
—*—
I have wept to me, as the unexpected
How sweet is rest after a toiling day!
How pleasant light after a length of darkness!
How refreshing food after a fast!

NAVARO.

VOL. II.

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FOR WILLIAM LANE, LEADENHALL-STREET.



MELBOURNE.

CHAP. I.

TO THE READER.

WELL, my good friend, we have now gone one stage of our journey, and, perhaps, you will think with less variety of amusement than I seemed to promise you at our first outset; but for this, or any similar disappointment we may hereafter experience together, I profess myself by no means accountable. I have taken a general sur-

MELBOURNE.

vey of the ground over which I promised to conduct you; but though I have undertaken to shew thee lions, and point out every thing worthy your observation, I must confess, that I have not accurately examined every furlong of the way, to see whether it abounded in singular and striking beauties. It may therefore happen, that for some miles together we may meet with jolting, rugged roads, with sandy or miry ways, in which the dust or the dirt may terribly incommode us; we may sometimes be obliged to cross the barren heath, or the uncultivated plain, in which there may be no object to attract our attention; but as I was only to shew, not to new-model the country, the best I can do for you is to promise to convey you, as quickly as possible, and without any unnecessary delays, through those parts of the journey, that are least interesting.

The country through which we have agreed to travel together, is human life. Now, as all the various provinces of this extensive region, bear some analogy to each other,

other, let me beg of you, my good friend, to examine your own territory, and see whether there be not some spots barren and thorny, unadorned and uncultivated. Indeed you may esteem yourself happy, if some few fields repay you for extensive tracts of desolation, by superior richness of prospect, or superior verdure of clothing. Upon this plan, then, let us proceed; let us agree to pass over, without disgust, the common, overgrown with furze, and the bog, ill-concealed by rushes, in hopes that the winding of the road will hereafter shew us vast plains, covered with all the luxuriance of vegetation, all the variety of beauty, embellished in prospect with hill and dale, wood and water, palaces and cottages.

To pursue the subject a little farther.— If you are, my good friend, either a botanist, a lawyer, a farmer, a painter, a grazier, or a man of taste, (and under one or other of these denominations surely almost all men are included) you can scarcely pass over one rood of land, without finding something
boog

to attract your attention; and the very exertion of making remarks, whether of praise or blame, will at least serve to amuse the mind. (So true do I hold that maxim in moral philosophy, that employment is absolutely necessary to enjoyment, and that an occupation, rather verging on painfulness, is better than total inactivity; and the truth of this maxim is every day illustrated by the conduct of those men and women whose situation places them above the necessity of actual labour, and who, to avoid that dreadful inertion, do busy themselves with great diligence, in raking into all the odd and dirty corners of the minds and hearts of their acquaintance, collecting, with laudable industry, a great number of blemishes and defects, some of a trivial and inoffensive, others of a more heinous and disgusting nature; and in arranging and classing the aforesaid blemishes and defects, which employment, as it cannot be a pleasing one, can only be chosen to avoid the more unpleasant languor of absolute indolence). You may, then, my
good

good reader, (if you can pardon my long parenthesis, and if not, you may leave it out), endeavour to discover whether the minute difference between classes and orders be classically arranged? Whether the boundaries between the premises of John Doe and Richard Roe, be accurately and distinctly laid down? Whether the fields are in good order, and promise an advantageous crop? Whether the light and shade be such as to shew the prospect to the best advantage? and whether there may not be some picturesque spots? Whether the country seems well supplied with live stock and provender? or whether the general arrangement of the whole does not conduce to general advantage, though some particular hedgerows may be too straight, some buildings ill-planned, and some defects ill-concealed? In whichever of these characters, my friend, you view the country through which you pass, you will still find some subject for animadversion or approbation. If indeed you should be one of those persons of false taste, who

are resolved never to be pleased, my advice to you is to shut up the book; unless, indeed, you feel more pleasure in discovering faults than beauties; in this case I will not claim your indulgence for my faults, but beg your pardon for any little merit I may chance to have, since the delight you would receive from any performance must be in an inverse proportion to its merits.

Whether the light and shade look as to show the prospect to the best advantage; and whether there may not be some picturesque spots? Whether the country seems well supplied with live stock and provender; or whether the general arrangement of the whole does not conduce to general advantage, though some particular hedgerows may be too straight, some buildings ill-planned, and some defects, ill-concealed; in which ever of these characters, my friend, you view the country through which you pass, you will still find some subject for admiration or approbation. It indeed you should be one of those persons of taste, who

CHAP. II.

A MEETING.

RESTORED to confidence and peace, Melbourne, at the appointed time, accompanied George Macartney to Cambridge, and now that Edmund was removed, obtained a degree of influence over his companion, which had the most favourable effect on his character. George now began to look up to Melbourne as a friend; and finding that he challenged universal esteem, and that his company was courted by all characters, he endeavoured also to take him as a model; and if he did not become quite his counterpart, at least he was greatly im-

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proved,

proved, and lived in the most perfect harmony with him. Melbourne continued to associate chiefly with Lord George Montague; and after having passed the usual time at college, accepted, by Mr. Searle's advice, an offer made him by his friend, of attending him on a tour through the different countries of Europe. He paid first a short visit to Mr. Macartney, at Rose-Hill, and went down to spend a month at Linwood, previous to his departure for the continent, where he was to remain between two and three years. Mr. Searle saw, with delight, the rapid advances Melbourne had made towards every grace and every really valuable acquisition. He saw his person grown to a fine height, yet retaining the most perfect proportion; his countenance full of the most varied expression; his manners polished, and his address graceful and elegant. Of the talents of his head, or the virtues of his heart, no doubt could for a moment exist, since every action, every word

word displayed, in the most unaffected manner, strong sound sense, and refined integrity and philanthropy."

With rapture Melbourne revisited his old and favourite haunts; recognized, with delight, every spot, and almost every bush in the neighbourhood of Linwood, and with a pleasure of which only a good heart can be capable, lent himself to the clamorous joy and excessive praise of the Edmonds, who thought him, and honestly told him so, a God upon earth. Too swiftly flew this happy month, which Melbourne wished to have lasted for ever; and in his way back to town, remembered, what, in his haste to reach Linwood, he had before forgotten, that Mr. Macartney had given him a letter for a lady at York, which was very little out of his way. To York then he went, and finding the lady's house, was introduced at about six, in the evening to a large formidable circle of the best company in York. The lady of the house advanced to meet him, and

received him with great politeness,—announced his name to her company, and introduced him to several individuals more particularly. After staying an hour, he would have taken his leave, but Mrs. Lawson so earnestly requested him to finish the evening there, that, having no real excuse, he resumed his seat; and presently after, a party of five or six young ladies entered, from a walk. The tea was now brought in, and conversation became a little more general; but Melbourne was particularly taken up with examining the new addition to the party. Three of the girls were evidently handsome, the other two were less so; but Melbourne, who had been acquainted with very few young women, gazed on them with great curiosity, and was particularly well pleased with her, who was perhaps the least pretty of the whole group. After tea, the formality of the circle was broken, card parties were formed, and the young ladies, and two or three gentlemen, among whom Melbourne readily made one, went into another

another room, where there was a harpsichord. He still continued gazing, whenever he could gaze unobserved, at the young lady already mentioned, whose name he had not yet learnt, as the formality of an introduction had not been observed towards the young folks. The three beauties he found were sisters, and daughters to Sir Charles and Lady Willis. One of the others was a cousin of their's, a Miss Willis also; and these four alternately joined in catches and glees, duets and trios, and were occasionally accompanied by one or two of the young men. The other lady, Melbourne's favourite, did not play or sing, but Melbourne thought she gazed at him with particular attention; and certain it is, that he seldom raised his eyes to her face, that her's were not suddenly withdrawn, and with some confusion. This farce, however, had not lasted long, before one of the Miss Willis's spoke to her; and Melbourne, who was all attention, thought he caught her name; his impetuosity broke through all restraint; he ran up to her, seized

her

her hand, and earnestly looking in her face, exclaimed, "It must be! it is!"——

"Ah! Mr. Melbourne," replied she, "then I am not mistaken."——

"Julia, dear Miss Dalrymple, what a surprise!"——

"Good Heaven!" said Julia, "can it be a surprise to you? did not you know you were at my aunt's house?"

It is very true that Melbourne did not know that Mrs. Lawson was the aunt with whom Julia had so long resided; and Mr. Macartney, who wished to surprise Melbourne, had cautioned his sister not to introduce them to each other, but to wait for the mutual discovery; but to Julia this appeared incomprehensible; she could not conceive that Melbourne could be at York, at the house of Mrs. Lawson, and not expect to see her.

"And, indeed," said she, "Mr. Melbourne, though I knew you the moment I saw you, yet from your taking no notice of me, I thought I must be mistaken, and was rejoiced

rejoiced I had not followed my first impulse, which was to have flown to, and acknowledged the preserver of my life. Your memory, then, is not so true as mine!"

"Dear Julia," replied Melbourne, and then blushing, added, "dear Miss Dalrymple, only consider that four years have transformed you from an amiable child to—— an ——."

"And they have transformed you too," replied Julia to his hesitating speech, which she was not sorry to interrupt, "from a rough school-boy to a well-powdered gentleman;—but come," said she, "be known to these ladies, who have often heard me mention my obligations to Mr. Melbourne, and who will not therefore wonder at the joy I express on seeing you."

Julia then gracefully introduced him to Miss Willis, and to Miss Mary, to Miss Ann, and to Miss Charlotte Willis, and then turning to Miss Willis, said, "And do you, my dear Caroline, go through the ceremony with the gentlemen, for I can do no more."

Mr.

"Mr. Melbourne," said Miss Willis, "first let me thank you, in all our names, for our dear little friend here, and then I will tell you that this is my eldest brother, Frederick Willis; this is Mr. Belfield; and this Mr. Monieriff; and, gentlemen, you all know that this is the brave and gallant Mr. Melbourne, who saved Miss Dalrymple from an untimely grave."

And with these words the lively and affectionate girl sat down by Julia, and seized her hand with a look of sincere regard. Melbourne took the chair on the other side of Julia, and as the confederate Miss Willis resumed their music, he enjoyed an hour's delightful conversation, during which, he found she had amply fulfilled every promise of grace, sense, and feeling, which her amiable childhood had made. Delighted with this rencontre, he felt mortified and disappointed when they returned to the drawing-room; but Mrs. Lawson came up to them with a look of infinite good-humour. "Aye," says she, "I see how it is; you have found each

each other out without any help from me! Well, Mr. Melbourne, you are not sorry you staid? My brother knew he might trust me with his secret. Yet, if I had not been forced to play at cards with old Mrs. Frumington, I should have liked dearly to have witnessed the discovery. Well, Mr. Melbourne, you'll stay and eat your bread and cheese with us?—yes, yes, I know you will; nobody else shall stay, and you and Julia shall talk over old stories.—What, I warrant you have not forgot pulling her out of the lake.—Well, 'twas lucky enough you were not both drowned, however. Oh! how I watched you when the girls came in from their walk;—well, thinks I, he don't suspect any thing at all; my brother said he did not know I was Julia's aunt.—Aha, but little Julia thinks she knows him, I perceive. Now was n't I very cunning, and kept my own counsel very well?"

"Indeed," said Julia, "I did know Mr. Melbourne the moment I came in, but as nothing passed, I concluded myself mistaken,

taken; for I thought, had I been right, you would have said something about it."

"Aye, child," replied the good-humoured, chatty old lady, "and so I should, had not my brother, in the very letter which Mr. Melbourne brought me, charged me not to introduce you to each other, but to let you find one another out.—Look you, here he says, 'If Julia happens to be out of the room when Melbourne first arrives, neither tell her nor him a word of the matter.—I should be curious to know if they would re-collect each other.'

The company departed; Mrs. Lawton encouraged the chat of the young people; and the evening appeared so short, that Melbourne consented to stay another day at York.

CHAP. III.

VERY LONG, AND VERY FULL OF MATTER.

THE next day, and another, Melbourne passed at York in the charming society of his friend Julia Dalrymple; and Mrs. Lawson was kind enough to suspend part of her usual dissipation on his account; nor could he leave this city on the third day, without severe regret; and promised himself another visit to it, immediately on his return to England. He was, however, obliged at length to quit the newly-discovered friend of his childhood, and hastening to London by no dilatory journeys, after having paid his respects to Mr. Macartney, and thanked him

for the agreeable surprise he had prepared for him, he went to the house of Lord George's father, the Duke of G——, and found their travelling equipage and suite all ready, and that the next day but one was appointed for their departure. He was received with infinite kindness by the Duke and Dutches, and by the Marquis of S——, Lord George's elder brother, to whom he was already slightly known, and who politely expressed their satisfaction in Lord George's choice of a friend. The following day they were joined by a gentleman, who was to take the direction of their travels, and the succeeding morning bade adieu to London. Through all the various accidents which happened to them, in common with all travellers, I shall not pretend to follow them, but shall place them safe at Naples, where they proposed to make some stay before they proceeded to Rome; they had letters of recommendation to the first people in this city, and for some weeks passed their time very pleasantly, till at length Melbourne perceived

ceived his friend become dull and absent, and attributed the change to ill health. His attention and kindness were perpetually exerted towards him; and one day, that he had persuaded him to stroll on the sea-shore, and enjoy the refreshing breezes, finding that nothing restored his charming vivacity, Melbourne proposed changing the scene, as the best plan in pursuit of health.

"You are mistaken, my friend," said Lord George, "in attributing my seriousness to the effects of ill health; it is my mind that is ill at ease, and no indisposition that has occasioned the change you perceive; nor will I, from you, conceal the reason of my thoughtfulness.—In my last letters from England, my father and mother both dwell with delight on a projected alliance which is to take place immediately on my return home, between me and Lady Susan Dermery; and tell me, that, although I am not now much acquainted with the lady, they have no doubt of my admiring her, and preferring her to any other young woman of fashion when I be-

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Eliza

I become known to her. I have seen Lady Susan, and acknowledge her elegance, her beauty, and her pleasing qualities, but, my dear Melbourne, this union can never make me happy!—Shall I not own to you, my friend, the whole extent of my sorrow? Melbourne, I have no heart to give Lady Susan Dermer; I have left it with an humbler fair, an amiable and engaging girl, with whom I danced at a race-ball in the country.”

“But this, my Lord,” said Melbourne, “may be only a slight and transient attachment;—in one evening, at a ball, the heart of my friend could hardly be enslaved for life.”

True, Melbourne; and had I not been imprudent, my attachment would probably have been only a transient one; but I saw this engaging rustic three or four times afterwards, and endeavoured to raise myself an interest in her heart, in which my vanity flatters me I succeeded too well to allow me to think of any other woman.”

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"The Duke and Dutchess," replied Melbourne, "are so tenderly indulgent to you, that they will surely not insist on a marriage which is to sacrifice your happiness."

"They are, it is true, most tenderly indulgent," answered Lord George, "but you know not how much they are interested in this plan. In fact, there has been a long family feud between my ancestors and those of Lady Susan; and you know these hereditary quarrels are generally made up by an intermarriage of the families. Had not Lord S—— been publicly known to be on the point of marriage with Lady Selina Frederick, my father writes me word, that the consequence of both families would have required that he should have led Lady Susan to the altar, but in consequence of his engagement, the happy, the enviable office devolves on me; and, indulgent as my father is, he would ill brook a refusal on account of a clandestine attachment even with my amiable Julia, whom, were he to see, I am certain he would admit; but ———."

The sensations of Melbourne were not, at this instant, of the most enviable kind, yet there might be an hundred Julias.

"And where, my dear Lord," said Melbourne, "did you meet with this captivating rustic?"

"At a race-ball in the neighbourhood of York," replied Lord George; "her name is Julia Dalrymple, and a most engaging girl she is. I have seen hundreds more critically handsome,—indeed I am not certain she is handsome at all; but so much expression of countenance, so much intelligence, so much sensibility, and so much grace, I never saw in any other female."

That Lord George continued to descant on the perfections of Julia Dalrymple, afforded Melbourne a few moments to collect his thoughts, and regain a composure which this intelligence had destroyed; that Julia loved Lord George, he had no doubt, and his part was instantly decided. He turned towards his friend, and said, "It is singular enough; Julia Dalrymple lives with her
5 aunt,

aunt, Mrs. Lawson, at York; does she not, my Lord?"

"I believe she does," answered Lord George; "but she was then on a visit to a family of the name of Willis."

"'Tis the same person," replied Melbourne; "and the very girl whom so many years ago I had the happiness to save from being drowned, and whom I called to see in my way to town from Linwood."

"And is she not engaging," said Lord George; "can you not pardon my attachment?"

"Indeed," replied Melbourne, "she was a most amiable child, and from what I have seen of her lately, she appears quite worthy of a serious passion."

"Am not I then to be pined," asked Lord George, "who knowing and loving such a being, and having established myself, perhaps, some interest in her gentle bosom, am condemned to be persecuted with another marriage, involving not only myself, but the lovely Julia, in distress?"

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The approach of company was a welcome interruption to Melbourne, who, till now, had never suspected that his heart was so tenderly alive to the concerns of Miss Dalrymple. He determined, however, to struggle against a passion, whose existence he had only learnt by a conviction of its unhappiness; and certain as he was that Julia was tenderly attached to Lord George, (as, indeed, who would not?) he determined to drive her from his thoughts, where, after this discovery, she seemed to dwell more than ever. Sometimes it occurred to him, that had he, unaffectedly, let his friend perceive that he was his rival, as his first emotions had nearly betrayed him to do, however involuntarily, he should perhaps have offered a strong motive to Lord George's generous mind, to detach him from a passion which would at once interfere with the designs of his family, and with the happiness of his friend. But the welfare of Julia Dalrymple was the chief object of his wishes; and certain that he should do her an injury, were
he

he to unite her fate to that of a beggar like himself, independent of the knowledge of her affection for Lord George, he determined to make a sacrifice of his love, both to love and to friendship.

It was now Melbourne's turn to be thoughtful. Lord George had found relief in opening his heart to his friend, and was by him encouraged to hope for the best; he even flattered himself that the Duke would allow him to please himself in so important a point, though he knew that he had for many years been estranged from his own brother, Spencer Montague, for having formed a connection a little derogatory to the pride of the family, having married the daughter of a Baronet with a numerous train of children, and a very small income, out of which Mr. Montague scorned to receive any portion with his wife. All this Lord George knew, but to all this the sanguine confidence of youth completely blinded him, and he wrote, in all the vivacity of

hope, to entreat his father would take no further steps in the affair.

In the meanwhile the young Englishmen were universally courted at Naples; and Melbourne sought to lose in company the sense of sorrow which lay too heavy at his heart. He certainly might, if he would, have entered into engagements of a tender nature with more than one female of high rank at Naples, but he rather shunned than courted the advances that he met with, and was universally known by the name of the Handsome Insensible!

“ Signor Inglese Insensible,” said a lady to him one day in company, “ have you left your heart in England, or does the clear air of Naples give you the spleen? I know you Englishmen are subject to that complaint.”

It was of no avail, that the tutor's letters to the Duke of G—— gave the highest and most deserved praise to Lord George Montague's conduct, and particularly to the care with which he had avoided all tender engagements.

ments: the Duke was so certain that an Italian entanglement alone could have rendered his son cold to the offer of Lady Susan Dermer's hand, that he desired they would shorten their stay abroad, and merely paying a short visit to the court, where Mr. Montague resided, be in England again by a day appointed.

Melbourne, who sought in absence and variety a cure for the hopeless passion he had unfortunately imbibed, was sorry for this summons, and left Naples with regret; not actually at leaving Naples, but at the idea of returning to a country, which had now lost its chief charms to him. He promised himself great pleasure, however, from the intended visit to Mr. Montague; and it was with proportionable mortification that he learnt even that visit was set aside by a second summons from the Duke of G——. It was now no longer possible to flatter Lord George with the least hope; the Duke evidently hinted at his suspicions that an Italian attachment could be the only cause of his son's

backwardness to accept so eligible an offer, and every instance of his implacability, and of his strong adherence to rank and fortune, now rushed with double force on the mind of the unfortunate lover of Julia. Melbourne shared in, and pitied the distress of his friend; and so truly did he enter into his sorrows, that he even felt as if it would be impossible for him ever to seek an union with Julia, though Lord George should be for ever cut off from any hopes of success, by being married to another woman. Already Melbourne imagined it wholly impossible for any other object to succeed the image of Julia in his heart—so able a master is Love, and so quick is his progress; and judging of his friend by himself, he feared that even were Lord George united to Lady Susan, it would severely wound his feelings, to behold Miss Dalrymple the wife of another, and particularly of the friend who had shared his confidence. No less miserable than Lord George, Melbourne exerted himself to sooth the mind, and to divert the attention of his friend,

backward- 42

friend, who, in his turn, endeavoured to alleviate the misery his hopeless love occasioned to him, by interesting himself about the future welfare of Melbourne.

Lord George enquired what line of life Melbourne intended to pursue; and when he heard that the church was his choice, he endeavoured to turn him from that design, telling him, that his talents were too brilliant to be buried in a country village, and advised him to attach himself to some leading statesman, and rise into notice, and honour, and power, by serving his country in a public capacity.

"My dear Lord," replied Melbourne, "were I vain enough to attribute to myself the talents you flatteringly ascribe to me, I am not ambitious enough to follow the plan you propose. Notice, and honour, and power, were never meant for a man of obscure origin, without name or fortune, to grace a public line; and from my earliest childhood, at least ever since I was capable of chusing, the church has been so desirably

my preference, owing, perhaps, to the amiable example of my most excellent Mr. Searle, that I cannot imagine any talents, any advantages, too brilliant to be devoted to it."

"Indeed, Melbourne," replied Lord George, "I think you owe to your country the services of an able head, and a worthy heart; and I could be so much more useful to you in that line, than in any other, that I should wish to guide your preference that way. We would be joint members for some place where my father's interest prevails. My uncle Spencer would take you by the hand; he would know how to appreciate integrity and abilities like his own; and I should have the delight of seeing the friend of my choice universally admired, esteemed, and beloved—the idol of a nation."

"Your ideas, my friend," said Melbourne, "rove rather beyond the regions of probability. Your humble Melbourne was never formed to shine a star of the first magnitude; and permit me to say, that my spirit is too independent to crouch to a patron
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for places I should be unworthy to fill; nor could I submit to accept of those unimportant, useless posts, that are only fit to reward decayed veterans in the service, and to burthen the nation with increased expence: but were I ever so certain that the flattering picture you have drawn would ever be realized, excuse me if I say, your friendship is the only trait in the whole that would gladden my heart. No! Lord George, I will not attempt to guide the mystic wheels of state. Humble content, and literary leisure in a country parsonage, would satisfy my utmost ambition."

But consider," replied Lord George, "how much more extensively useful you would become, if you adopted my proposal. What is the value of a little country village, compared to that of a nation?"

"Your sanguine temper, my friend," answered Melbourne, "has led you to adopt a wild, visionary chimera, and fancy it a reality. By what means would it ever be in my power to contribute to the welfare of
c 4 a nation?"

a nation? By what means am I to rise to that summit of extensive utility? All this is at least uncertain, while the benefit any man of moderate talents and a good heart could certainly do in a small village, is not merely a dream."

"That is the very subject of my complaint," replied Lord George, "that any man of moderate talents might do as much good in such a situation as you could with all your brilliant accomplishments and cultivated understanding, while it is not every rational animal that is capable of serving the state."

"And in what occupation, my dear Lord George, could the most brilliant talents be better bestowed than on the service of the church? It is an universal, and a vulgar error, to which, I am sure, your mind is infinitely superior, that any thing does for a parson; and it is from the prevalence of this ill-founded prejudice, that the sacred order is fallen into such disrepute. Every young man, who either has, or fancies he has, talents

talents, fancies himself too superior a being to be buried alive as a country parson; and, entering into some less certain, and less happy line, adds one more to the number of unsuccessful adventurers."

"There is no doubt," replied Lord George, "that you are well calculated to shine as a clergyman; and as I know you are not apt to take up opinions without due consideration, I am convinced that the plan you have adopted, is perhaps that in the world that best suits your disposition; nor should I have attempted to alter your determination, but from the knowledge that I could be more useful to you in any other line."

"That your motives on this, and every other occasion, are ever those of the kindest friendship," answered Melbourne, "I do not, nor ever can doubt; and it is possible that circumstances may yet occur to induce me to change my plan, to which the respect I bear your advice, would not a little contribute."

Melbourne would have argued for ever in favour of the profession he had determined to pursue; but he saw, or fancied he saw, that Lord George was a little piqued at the steadiness he evinced, and therefore endeavoured to put an end to the argument. He did not really think it probable that he should abandon the study of divinity, though, when he considered that it was necessary for him to remain still longer at Cambridge, he almost doubted whether it would be in his power.

They were now approaching fast to the end of their travels, and Melbourne saw, with regret, the disappointment of the brilliant hopes he had formed of visiting every spot, consecrated by the historic muse, in the environs of Rome—of examining the places formerly inhabited by the Scipios, the Catos, the Cæsars, and all the illustrious names of that conquering nation; and joined heartily with Lord George, in the sorrow he expressed on the sudden conclusion of their travels.

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"And yet, my friend," said Melbourne, "the fame which so much dazzles every eye, the splendour of conquest, the triumphs of patriotism, and the boasted virtues of the Roman race, throw a false glare over their characters, and have done as much mischief to society in after-ages, by the foolish imitation of conduct ill suited to our circumstances, or by the servile adoption of principles incongruous with the chief duties of mankind, as ever their destroying swords, and boundless ambition did, in their own times, to those nations where they carried war and desolation."

"Indeed," said Lord George, "I think many of our cotemporaries are perverted by the blind admiration usually paid to all that is ancient; but you must allow, Melbourne, that the Grecians, in particular, carried learning of all kinds to a higher pitch than we do, at least that our chief lights are borrowed from them."

"And it is because we spend so much time in borrowing from them," replied

Melbourne, "that we make no further advances in true knowledge. Our heads are filled; and our opinions biased with the opinions, sentiments, and actions of the Greeks and Romans, not considering that their mode of conduct would but ill apply to the present age, even if we set all higher duties, and more incontrovertible opinions out of the question."

"But surely," replied Lord George, "we have very few writers at all comparable to the many excellent masters of composition produced in those countries and ages; no warriors to be at all mentioned on a footing with their's—no legislators equal to several the old world produced."

"A prophet," replied Melbourne, "hath no honour in his own country. Posterity will perhaps rank the superior geniuses of the modern world as highly as we do the ancients. Learning and knowledge of every kind is far more universally diffused now than it was then. Many excellent compositions are sent abroad into the world, and, unnoticed,

unnoticed, or at least forgotten, among the crowd of competitors. One novelty pates another off the stage. Happily for us, the art of war is now placed on a footing that will not allow of universal conquest, and the fundamental principles of government are too well understood to need the frequent exertion of sublime legislators; and, after all, my friend, I am sure your good sense and unbiaſſed judgment will allow, that all legislation that tends not to make men more happy, all learning that leads not to wisdom and virtue, and all war, except merely to reſiſt the encroachments of tyranny and ambition, are vain and frivolous. "I know," ſaid Lord George, "I you pay no homage to the brilliant and ſhewy characters of hiſtory." "Indeed I do not," replied Melbourn, "and I am not ſure whether the knowledge of hiſtory does not do more harm than good; it certainly leads the mind far away from the chief duties of human life; it repreſents nothing with applauſe but bloody conqueſts, and
prosperous

prosperous ambition, and false heroism. Scarcely in one instance does the historic muse bestow her praises or her censures according to true morality; instead of forbearance and patience, she inculcates resistance and violence; of submission to the laws—rebellion and anarchy; of natural affection and tenderness—inhumanity and ferocity; and dignifies these amiable qualities with the titles of firmness, patriotism, and heroism. The only great men, according to those delusive maxims, are the ambitious, the subtle, and the sanguinary;—but you will say I have already commenced parson, and am preaching you to sleep.”

“I am amused with your sentiments, my dear Melbourne,” replied Lord George, “and the pleasures of your conversation divert my thoughts from dwelling entirely on the disappointment I fear I must undergo.”

“I hope, my friend,” said Melbourne, “that means will be found to induce your father to concur with your wishes; but if not,

not, believe me, there is more true magnanimity and heroism in conquering a weakness, and in supporting a misfortune with patience and equanimity, than in all the victories that adorn the Roman name."

"Indeed," answered Lord George, "if the merit of the triumph is proportioned to the pain of the struggle, I shall deserve more than an ovation; if I submit with a good grace to my father's orders—Oh! Melbourne, you know not the power of love; you know not what it is to pant for one darling object; to see her happiness dependent on your's; to feel every wish, every hope directed to her alone, and to have the cup of felicity placed for ever out of your reach, and your own nauseous potion doubly embittered by the certainty that she shares your disappointment."

"That, indeed," said Melbourne, feelingly, "is a poignant consideration. What touched only himself, a man of resolution would know how to bear."——

And as he spoke these words, he felt a new strength in his heart; and, certain of Julia's love for Lord George, determined to drive her from his bosom, and, at least, bury in silence, if he could not wholly conquer, the ill-fated passion she had inspired him with.

"And yet," said Lord George, "I feel that I should be more miserable were I deprived of the hope of Julia's love. You will say this is selfish and inconsistent—I acknowledge that it is so; and yet so odd and unaccountable is the power of this passion, that I should certainly lose my last glimpse of hope, were I not assured that Julia shared my sentiments."

"But when hope is totally excluded, my Lord?" said Melbourne.

"I cannot probe the wound so deeply," replied Lord George, with a sigh.

W. melbourne is a poignant consideration of the human mind, and how it would know how to bear.

voice, and the family. The family were all well, the man said. Melbourne enquired for whom he was waiting. For his master's father, he replied. "I did not know," said Melbourne to himself, "that Mr. Macartney's father is alive to-day."

CHAP. IV.

He was thrown up stairs into the drawing-room, where he found only Miss Macartney and Edmund; they were laughing violently as he entered, but, composing their countenances, assumed a look of surprise and for-

FAMILY HISTORY.

OUR two young travellers reached London together, and there took leave of each other. Lord George went down to his father's seat in the country, where the family then were, and whither Melbourne did not think it proper to accompany him, as so serious and delicate a business was to be settled. He accordingly went, after his friend's departure, to the house in Bloomsbury Square, where he was let in by a servant in deep mourning; his heart gave him at the sight of the fellow, who was a stranger to him; and he enquired, with a trembling voice,

voice, after the family. The family were all well, the man said. Melbourne enquired for whom he was in mourning. For his master's father, he replied. "I did not know," said Melbourne to himself, "that Mr. Macartney's father had been alive so lately." He was shewn up stairs into the drawing-room, where he found only Miss Macartney, and Edmund; they were laughing violently as he entered, but, composing their countenances, assumed a look of surprise and sorrow.

"Mr. Melbourne returned so soon!" exclaimed Edmund. "What can have brought you so suddenly to England?"

"Lord George was recalled," replied Melbourne, "by his father, on particular business; but allow me to hope I see you both well, and that all the rest of the family are well."

"Very well, Sir," said Miss Macartney.

"I have not heard from Mr. Macartney very lately," said Melbourne; I fear he has been a good deal distressed by the death of his

his father; or, perhaps, as we travelled home very rapidly, his letters may have missed me;—is he at home?"

"Who? Sir," said Miss Macartney, with a look of increased surprise.

"Your father, Madam, Mr. Macartney; I should be happy to see him."

"It is cruel, Mr. Melbourne," replied Miss Macartney, "to insult our grief; you know my father is dead!"

"Good God!" exclaimed Melbourne, and hiding his face, sunk down on the seat they had not yet invited him to take. He remained some time lost in sorrow, and was recalled to recollection by the voice of Edmund, (Miss Macartney having left the room).

"You may well be grieved, indeed, Mr. Melbourne," said he, "you have lost a most invaluable treasure. Such a friend as my father has been to you, is not to be found every day."

"That is very true," said Melbourne, "and indeed I am truly grieved."

"I don't

"I don't doubt it," replied Edmund; "you lose a great deal more than his friendship,—the rank in life to which he so unjustly raised you, in prejudice to his own children; the consequence you so eagerly assumed on his kindness; the society of your superiors, in which he placed you, you must now, I am afraid, abandon, and return to the carter's frock, and the plough's tail. I do not mean to blame my father," continued Edmund; "but, surely, he was very wrong to take you from your natural line of life, and give you ideas and dispositions which must be an eternal bar to your happiness, and all the hurt of his own family, against whom your cursed insinuations prejudiced him."

"Be careful of your words, Macartney," said Melbourne, "such language, such aspersions, I will bear from no man." "I dare say," resumed Edmund, "you would not be sorry to shew your gratitude to the father, by taking away the life of the son; but I have not quite executed my nob I " father's

father's orders with respect to you—he has left you a legacy of fifty pounds, and a ring. Take the ring out of that box, Sir, and I will give you a draft on my banker for the money; it will, I think, be the last injustice my father can commit in your favour.

“The ring,” said Melbourne, “as a remembrance of my excellent friend, I will thankfully accept, but I shall take none of the money, I assure you.”

“Well, Sir,” said Edmund, “if your pride will bear you through, it is well for you, but perhaps, hunger may one day make you wish you had not disdained the last token of my father's friendship.”

Melbourne suited himself with a ring, and rising, wished young Macartney good evening, and left the house, which had for so many years been his asylum. Nor did Edmund even ask where he was to be found; but, as he was going, he recollected that possibly George or William might wish to see him, and he scratched his name, and the hotel where he proposed sleeping, on a card, which

which he gave to the servant, telling him he should leave town the next morning early.

To his hotel, then, Melbourne repaired with a heavy heart, ruminating on the loss of his friend, and on the unkindness of Edmund; but he had not been long in his apartment, before the door opened, and William entered. William, on account of his youth, had never been much with Melbourne, not having gone to Eton till he had quitted it; but whenever they had met in the vacations, the boy had shewn a sincere attachment, and now flew to him with open arms. Melbourne received him with equal affection, and saw with pleasure great improvement in his young friend, who was now about fourteen.

"Oh! Melbourne," exclaimed William, "my poor father!"

"You have, indeed," replied Melbourne, "sustained a very terrible loss."

"A loss that you and I, Melbourne," said he, "feel more sensibly than any of them. My father loved you tenderly to the

the very last moment of his life; he was actually writing to you when he was struck."

"How was he taken? my dear William," said Melbourne, "and how long ago?"

"Not above three weeks," replied William; "he was, as I say, writing to you when he was seized with a sudden giddiness, and rising to go to the door, dropped down in an apoplectic fit. The next morning some hopes were entertained of his recovery, but towards evening the fit returned, and the third day, at the same hour, deprived me of the tenderest of fathers, and you of an excellent friend."

"And he was writing to me," said Melbourne; "dear man! Oh! William, that letter!"

"I have preserved it for you," said William. "In an interval of ease and reason, the second day, my father asked for it; I brought it to him, and he said to me, 'I am unable to finish it, William, but if I should not recover, do you take care of it for Melbourne; and, William,' said he, 'you

"you seem to love Melbourne better than your brothers do; cultivate his friendship, my dear boy—he is a very worthy and excellent young man."

And with these words William threw his arms around Melbourne, and hid his face on his shoulder. Melbourne pressed him affectionately to his heart. "Blush not at your tears, my dear William," said he, "they are most graceful, mine flow in concert with them."

"Here is the letter, Melbourne," said William, when he was a little recovered; "I am sure you will value it as a relic."

Melbourne took the letter, and read as follows:

"My dear Melbourne,

"Your letters continue to give me the highest pleasure, as they shew me that I have made a most worthy choice in my adoption of you; I may indeed, call it an adoption, for few fathers love their sons better than I love you. You will have thought me long in writing to you, but I have not been altogether

gether well of late; and though my indisposition is nothing alarming, it unfits me for any occupation, and depresses my spirits. I am not sorry, on my own account, that your tour is to be shortened, as it will give me the pleasure of seeing you again sooner than I expected; though I enter into your regrets for being disappointed of the most interesting part of your travels, which I have no doubt you consider Rome would be. However, my dear Melbourne, you are young, and may have many opportunities of renewing your excursions. Come, therefore, without regret, to a friend who is eager to see you placed in a permanent and advantageous situation. Life is at best uncertain, and with the feelings I have at present, I ought not to delay doing what I mean. I shall no longer defer settling all my worldly affairs, and have ordered the lawyer to be with me to-morrow to draw up my will. You have, I know, too much understanding to apprehend my end to be the nearer for this intention, and you will readily allow

that every man ought to be prepared for Death; for though to some he gives many warnings, to many his call is sudden and unexpected. But I will not damp your young mind with my melancholy. If your intention still holds for the church, you shall keep what further terms are necessary at Cambridge, and I will assist you to the utmost of my power. If you would like to go to India, I have con——."

Here ended this valuable and affecting fragment over which Melbourne shed torrents of tears, and remained in a silence which William had too much feeling to attempt to break.

They passed the remainder of the evening together, and Melbourne told his young friend his intention of going next day down to Linwood, and consulting Mr. Searle upon his future plans.

"I am powerless to serve you," replied William, "and I am afraid my brothers want the inclination; George, indeed, is going

going abroad, but Edmund and my sister are both going to be married as soon as decorum will permit; and if their minds were not so engaged, I fear their hearts are not well disposed towards you."

"On them I rest no dependance," said Melbourne, "but do I know their intended alliances?"

"I believe you know young Trebison," said William; "I think he was at Cambridge with you?"

"I know him very well," said Melbourne; "is Miss Macartney going to marry Trebison?"

"She is, and Edmund marries Trebison's cousin, a Miss Farquhar."

"I have heard her spoken of," said Melbourne, "as very beautiful."

"And very wild, and very extravagant," added William, "she is not yet sixteen."

"And Trebison, I think, is younger than Miss Macartney—is he not?" said Melbourne.

"I believe he is," replied William, "and not, as I apprehend, of the best possible disposition."

"Very far from it, indeed," said Melbourne; "I am sorry Edmund and Miss Macartney enter into life with such indifferent prospects. There is one other person after whom I wish to enquire, your cousin Miss Dalrymple—is she still at York?"

"She is at present," answered William, "but I fancy she will not remain there long. Her good aunt Lawson is at the point of death. She took the loss of my father very much to heart."

"She was your father's sister, I think?" said Melbourne.

"Yes, she was," resumed William, "and Julia was the daughter of another, and a very favourite sister, who married, and went to India, where she died in child-bed of this daughter, whom she recommended to the care of my mother; and my father was so much attached to the child, that he would never have parted from her during my mother's

mother's life; but afterwards Matilda was hardly old enough to have the care of another young woman, and Julia was sent down to live with Mrs. Lawson; but I understand, if my poor aunt dies, Mr. and Mrs. Trebison have made her an offer of living with them, which I believe she will accept."

"And is her father still in India?" asked Melbourne.

"We are very uncomfortably situated with respect to her father," replied William; "for some time after the arrival of Julia, he wrote to us very regularly, but suddenly he ceased writing, and from that time to this we have heard nothing of him. There is very little reason to doubt of his death, though we have had no account of it; and the only intelligence ever received of him, in answer to a variety of enquiries made by my father, was, that about the time he ceased to write, he left the settlement in a country vessel, and was heard of no more. Whether or not the ship foundered at sea, or whether they were taken prisoners (for it was a time

of war) no subsequent accounts have ever ascertained."

"Does Julia," enquired Melbourne, "know of the uncertainty respecting her father's fate?"

"Yes, she does," answered William; "and is for ever anxiously expecting news of him; but, for my own part, I have no doubt but that he is dead, and with him all Julia's expectations of fortune; for my aunt Lawton can have nothing to leave her but the savings of her jointure, which cannot, according to her mode of life, be very capital, and Mr. Dalrymple's family are numerous and poor; and, as you may judge, my poor father's death was too sudden to allow him to have made any alteration in his will, otherwise I am sure Melbourne and Julia would not have been forgotten."

Melbourne and Julia! the sound, even from the lips of an unsuspecting boy, thrilled through his heart with a sort of rapture; and when he took leave of his sensible young friend, he embraced him with double tenderness

ness for the charming idea; and when alone in his apartment, amused himself with dwelling on sounds so delightful.

CHAP. V.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

THE simple incident recorded in the last chapter, put Melbourne into a happier frame of mind than he had enjoyed for some time; but when he laid his head upon the pillow, his accustomed reflections crowded on his thoughts, and dispersed the fairy ideas William's innocent expression had contributed to raise. Lord George Montague and Julia's mutual affection, and mutual disappointment; his own, and as he now learned, Julia's beg-

gary, and the total hopelessness of his increasing passion, all presented themselves in terrible array before his mental eye, and chased away every desire to sleep. Mr. Mac rtney's death was another stroke he could ill support. On no part of the family, except William, had he the smallest dependance. Of Lord George Montague's family he knew but little, and from them he could not solicit favours; and his excellent friend, Mr. Searle, had very little power, though most ample inclination, to serve him. He now ruminated on his own future plans, and seeing no hope of ever rising in the church without patronage or money, he determined to abandon this darling, and had some thoughts of joining a small fleet of discovery, then fitting out by order of Government; but he deferred coming to any resolution till he had seen Mr. Searle.

Low as were his pecuniary hopes, he could not help going a few miles out of his way to visit Julia Dalrymple. The step was imprudent, for he was only likely to increase his
hopeless

hopeless passion; but she was unhappy, and he was in love. The case admitted of no argument, and if it had, the reason of twenty-one would not have out-weighed the inclination. He quitted therefore the stage at the nearest point from whence he could reach York, and set out on foot for Mrs. Lawson's, where he hoped to arrive before night-fall. In these hopes, however, he was disappointed; for, unacquainted with the road, he had deviated to some distance from the direct way, and found himself, at the approach of night, on a wide common, intersected by many cross paths. Perplexed and bewildered, he asked information at a hovel, and in almost unintelligible jargon, was directed to an inn at the distance of about two miles. Thither Melbourne bent his steps; the night was cold and rainy, and he thought he must again have mistaken his road, as he fancied he had already more than doubled the distance he had been warned of, when he perceived a light, and heard voices. To the spot thus pointed out to him he now hastened,

and found the place, dignified by the inhabitants of the hovel, with the name of an inn, to be no better than a wretched hedge ale-house, which however he knew to be the place spoken of by the sign of the Compasses. Delighted, however, to find shelter from the increasing inclemency of the weather, Melbourne entered the kitchen with no small alacrity, and seating himself by the fire, began drying his wet clothes; and calling for provision, they placed bread and cheese before him, and drew him a tankard of their best beer, and with an excellent appetite for his sauce, he found his fare delicious, and was already beginning to think of rest, when a young man of a very decent appearance entered, and began the same course of proceedings he had already gone through. To his demands for food the stranger added an enquiry whether he could have a bed, and the landlady said they had but one bed-room, which, if the other gentleman meant to sleep there, he had a right to, as first comer; but
perhaps

perhaps he would have no objection to a companion.

Melbourne, whose heart was benevolence itself, readily made the offer, which the stranger gratefully and cordially accepted, and they entered into conversation together. His companion was a few years older than himself; had something genteel, though shabby, in his appearance, and a very engaging countenance. His conversation was sensible, and his manners polished and gentlemanly, and Melbourne was much pleased at a chance which had enabled him to render a small civility to a person whom he liked so well, and from whose acquaintance he promised himself further pleasure. His new friend's name he found was Seymour, and he also meant to proceed the next day to York, whither they agreed to journey together, and which he assured Melbourne they should reach in a three hours' saunter. After a little more chat, they retired to their bedroom, which they found amply littered down with clean straw; and congratulating

each other on the excellent accommodations the Compasses afforded, they laid down together in their clothes, under the only blanket there was to shelter them from the cold to which the lath and plaster, and the ruinous windows and roof, gave very free admission. Seymour attempted to make an apology for intruding on the very indifferent lodging to which Melbourne had the prior right, but Melbourne assured him so cordially of the pleasure he took in sharing with him the luxuries they enjoyed, and of the persuasion he felt that Seymour would have done as much for him, that at length, almost burying themselves under the straw, they ceased their apologies and compliments, and Melbourne slept with that composure which health and youth only can bestow amidst such hardships.

The morning sun awoke them early, and Melbourne proposed breakfasting at York. Seymour agreed; and rising lightly from their downy pillow, they soon finished their toilet; and having amply satisfied the
hostess

hostess for their elegant entertainment, set out for York. In the contemplation of his approaching interview with Julia, whose power over his heart had increased even in absence, Melbourne could have found sufficient employment; but civility and goodwill towards Seymour induced him to enter into a conversation, for which the lovely prospect, and the fineness of the morning afforded at least a convenient beginning. They were on an eminence in the centre of an extensive common, whose boundaries were enriched with forests and hamlets, and diversified with water, and groups of cattle; the sun was not yet very high, and it was one of those keen, clear autumnal mornings, which invigorate the spirits, and elevate the mind. Melbourne expatiated on the beauty of the scene, and its natural influence on human nature, with the energy and enthusiasm of a poet. Seymour gazed with apparent pleasure and benevolence on his animated countenance, and when he had ended, replied, "I too once could feel all that you now so feelingly

feelingly describe, but those days are past; I had then ———. You, Sir, have known no sorrow; perhaps a prospect, wide and inviting as that which now spreads around us, opens before your youth, while mine is shut up in one of the narrowest and gloomiest paths the deepest recesses of the forest can afford."

"Perhaps, my friend," said Melbourne, (for the tone of sorrow instantly called on his heart for a warmer sentiment than cold compassion, and really inspired him with a friendship for Seymour, or at least a something very much resembling it, which can only rise spontaneously in the ingenuous and warm heart of youth); "perhaps, my friend, you are as much too desponding, as I am too sanguine. I have known sorrow, though not enough to repress the natural enthusiasm of my mind, yet enough to impress my heart with tenderness and sympathy for those who have suffered more."

"And if any thing could speak real pleasure to my heart," replied Seymour, "it would be that tenderness and sympathy so kindly
kindly

kindly expressed. I am not yet old, but I am older than you are, and perhaps my story may warn you of some dangers which you otherwise might not suspect; it is not long or complicated, and it may tend to create me a lasting interest in a heart where I think I should not like to be wholly forgotten."

"And I can promise you," answered Melbourne, taking Seymour's hand, "that you will ever be remembered by me with a real affection, and I wish it might be in my power to render you any service; but, alas! I am a poor and friendless individual! friendless as to any serviceable connexions, but, thank God, possessed of many valuable and affectionate friends, among whom I shall ever in future rank (may I not?) Mr. Seymour."

"Your ingenuous kindness charms and affects me," replied Seymour. "Hear then my story, and however you may hereafter hear my conduct misrepresented in the world, I am sure I shall ever have a warm advocate in you.—My real name is not Seymour, it is Davenport; and by that proscribed appellation

appellation you will perhaps hear me abused. My family is not unknown in the world, and I was born to high views, and expectations of rank and fortune. I was educated, as most young men of fashion are, in a very frivolous manner, and at a very early age was placed in the Guards, a school of the most unbounded dissipation, and consequently a post of the utmost danger. My own master at sixteen, liberally supplied with money, and incited by the example of my companions, can you wonder that I was plunged into the most ruinous debauchery—that I was abandoned to every scandalous excess in wine, women, and dice? that, in short, before I was twenty, I was most deeply in debt, in disgrace with my whole family, and forsaken by the more prudent, though not less vicious associates who had led me on; but I was fatally determined to keep up the spirit of the course of life I had entered into, and proceeded in the same manner as long as I could gain credit. I had but two or three companions left—desperate fellows, who had
nothing

nothing to lose, and who had so totally extinguished all principle and remorse, that they proposed to me a plan for raising money (of which we all stood in great need) of a most infamous and swindling nature. I recoiled with horror from the idea, and the shock the proposal gave me was of infinite service to me;—stung to the soul to find myself thought capable of being accessory to such a scheme, I determined seriously to reform; and in a very short time after, I broke with my companions, exchanged into another regiment, and behaved with the utmost circumspection. Here I regained some degree of dignity and consistency of character, and some pleasure in more laudable pursuits, and soon contracted a very intimate friendship with an amiable and worthy officer, whom, to the moment of my death, I shall love and honour, though he is, like every other comfort, for ever lost to me. Here I continued some time living in reputation, which I was fully determined never more to forfeit; and feeling in my own mind,

mind, that though I had been abandoned, I had not been thoroughly corrupted, I acquired a serenity of mind which subsequent events have banished from me for ever.

“ My friend introduced me to his family, and I became desperately in love with one of his sisters, a lovely and estimable young woman, and this attachment served to correct all remains of my former misconduct. Ambitious of deserving and obtaining my Arabella, I became daily more and more attentive to every particular; and at last I met with so favourable a reception, that I ventured to declare the passion she had inspired me with. No objections could be raised to the connexion in a worldly point of view, and I was fortunate enough to find the whole family very kindly disposed towards me. I had even obtained from my Arabella the soft confession of her answering love, and a few weeks were to have united us, and for ever to have secured my reformation and felicity, when some envious demon brought into the neighbourhood aggravated reports
of

of my former misdeeds, with the infamous addition of my having been concerned in the swindling transaction which had been carried into execution, and had made a great noise in the world. I was denied admittance into the house of my Arabella's parents, and her brother wrote me a long letter, taxing me with all my misconduct, with the heart-breaking aspersions I have mentioned; and after upbraiding me with daring to intrude myself, stained with so many enormities, into a family of virtue and reputation, ending with a challenge.

"In my answer I avowed the true facts, and denied the false and malignant insinuation of my having been concerned in that swindling business, for which the original contrivers of it had been expelled the regiment; but declined the challenge, as unable to fight with a man whom I loved and esteemed so much, and who was the brother of my adored Arabella.

"I received another letter from this angry and misjudging brother, calling still upon me
to

to fight, and urging me to prove myself, at least in one respect, worthy of the regard I had so unjustly obtained from himself and family; adding, that if I would not fight, he would post me for a coward. I continued firm, and answered him that I would not fight; that if he thought I had injured his sister, it was offering her a very poor reparation to give me a chance of robbing her of her brother; that if I was really the infamous swindler he took me for, I was unworthy to meet a gentleman on equal terms; and that if I was not so guilty, my offences did not call for such serious revenge; that, in short, nothing should tempt me to draw my sword against him, for that I would rather be stigmatized as a coward, than as the murderer of my friend.

“ Not to dwell too long on the minutiae of my story, I found myself very coolly looked upon by the other officers of the regiment, and in a very short time, finding myself every where ill received as a coward, and despised as a swindler, I sold, at a very low price,

out

out of the regiment. This step was however fatal to my interests; my father was necessarily apprized of it, and being himself of high rank in the army, honourably attained by actual and distinguished services, thought so deeply of the disgrace I had incurred, and the blemish I had sustained in that honour which he looked on as the first object to be pursued in life, that he disinherited me, and left the whole of his fortune to his second son. I was informed of this proceeding immediately by a sister who still preserved her affection for her ill-fated Frederick, and, as she advised me, took a journey to my father's country seat, not in the hope of reversing his decree, for I was not so sanguine, but at least to know at once the extent of my misfortune. Alas! Melbourne, I soon found it could not be greater—I was refused admittance into that house where I had once been looked up to as the future master, and retiring in despair to a cottage in the neighbourhood, was writing to my father when my kind sister entered. Our meeting

ing was mournful and hasty; she had stolen out, and dared not stay long to console me; nor was the purport of her words at all calculated to lessen the horrors of my despair. She advised me not at present to attempt, by any means, to soften my father's heart. 'He is just now,' said she, 'so cruelly incensed against you, that a mere trifle would provoke him to utter curses against you, for which perhaps he might be sorry when too late, and which you would feel too poignantly. He has not yet done this, and, remember, my Frederick,' added the kind-hearted girl, 'you have a zealous and attentive friend ever near him, who will watch for the moment most likely to awaken his tenderness, and who will neglect no opportunity to serve you.'

"I embraced my kind Maria, and promised to remain for some time at the cottage. I received there frequent visits from my sister, but no comfort yet gleamed for me. My father uttered many expressions which stung me to the soul, and said, I had brought

brought down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Could a swindler and a coward be the son of General Davenport? Alas! my dear misguided father, your son was neither; he had been abandoned to debauchery and riotous excesses; but the one stigma was wholly without foundation, and the other——good God! where could I have been a coward, but in fighting with the brother of my Arabella? This, however, he neither knew, nor would have believed. Honour, not true genuine honour, but the false glittering idol so worshipped by mankind, had more power over my father's mind, than the tenderest ties of friendship or affection; that darling principle would have led him to fight with his dearest friend, and would have taught him to think it contamination to hold any communication with so proscribed a being as his unhappy son. I dwell too minutes on these heart-breaking particulars; my father was suddenly seized with a palsy, and when my mother and sister thought it their duty to mention my name

to

to him, and to say that I was in the neighbourhood, he became so agitated with rage, as to increase the inflammation of his disorder, which, in a few hours afterwards, ended at once his life, and the hopes of his son. Behold me then, my friend, at the age of twenty-four, deprived of every blessing—every prospect blasted—every pursuit disappointed—my honour lost—my father's unrelenting rage incurred (I trust not his actual curse!)—my fortune given to another—my profession abandoned—my friend alienated, and my love contemned. Forsaken by my family—deprived of my wealth, without an occupation—despised by my associates, and rejected by Arabella, what could I do? The small sum of money for which I had sold my commission would not long support me, and my mother and sister were unable to give me any assistance. They had been left with a very insufficient pittance, to swell the fortune of the heir; and as I knew their generosity would induce them to punish themselves in order to give me some assistance, I formed
the

the resolution of secretly quitting the neighbourhood. I executed this plan, and changing the disgraced name of Davenport for the unsuspected one of Seymour, I came to reside in the neighbourhood of York, where I gain a scanty subsistence by my pen. Could I have ventured to go to London, the great mart for all kind of talents, my emoluments might be greater, but I should run the risk of being discovered, as unhappily I was most universally known.

“Such, my dear Melbourne, is my unhappy story; and such the miseries which at this early period of my life have deprived even the simple beauties of nature of all their charms for me. I have been there three years, earning a bare existence by the exertion of talents once cultivated for amusement only, and very inadequate to the task assigned them. I am just twenty-seven, and the scene of life is as completely shut upon me, as if I had already quitted the stage at the age of four-score!

CHAP. VI.

EXERTIONS OF FRIENDSHIP.

MELBOURNE had listened to the relation of his companion's history with the most unaffected sympathy; and though, when it was ended, he was not prodigal of his expressions of condolence, yet the few words he did utter were so expressive of pity and benevolence, that they for ever cemented the union between them. His sanguine temper, ever rising superior to misfortunes, whispered hopes of better days to Seymour, whose mind was sunk into so habitual a despondency, that it refused admittance to the idea of comfort.

"Surely,"

"Surely," said Melbourne, "the time will come when you will no longer be unhappy; when every one will do justice to your character, and your worth will be acknowledged by the friends dearest to your heart. The forsaken errors of youth cannot so completely overwhelm you, as to hide all the real good qualities you possess, and to crush for ever your better hopes."

"My friend," replied Seymour, "it is not by vague and ill-founded expectations that my wounded bosom can regain its lost peace; the objects of my warmest wishes, of my first affections, are irreparably gone from me. It is only by confining my views to the narrow scene of my actual exertions,—it is only by being completely occupied in providing the bare necessities of life, that I can drive from my remembrance the heart-breaking phantoms of what I might have been, and what I have forfeited. The wisest suggestions of reason can do nothing in my case, still less can the vain phantoms of hope; to forget and be forgotten by the world—

to banish for ever from my thoughts the expectations I once had cherished, and the dear forms of my Arabella and her brother,—this is all that is left for me. Now, indeed, I have another consolation—I shall henceforth dwell with pleasure on the name of Melbourne.”

Melbourne smiled, and cordially pressed the hand of his friend, and then said, “ And, alas! the faults for which you suffer, are not your own, but those of your education. A heart like your’s would never have erred, had your early reason been judiciously cultivated. Some other time (for we shall meet again, Seymour) I will tell you how fortunate my childhood has been, inauspicious as were all external circumstances; but not now, for we are very near the town.”

They went to a coffee-house and breakfasted, when Melbourne insisted on discharging the bill, looking on himself as the richer man, because he happened to have more cash in his pocket than Seymour; whereas, had he judged quite correctly, he would have seen that Seymour, accustomed to a very scanty subsistence, and acquiring it by his own labour,

was

was more independent than himself, who had been used to elegant fare, and knew not how to gain a single penny. After their breakfast, they took leave of each other, and Melbourne went to the door of Mrs. Lawson's house, where he waited some time without venturing to knock, for fear of disturbing the sick lady. After he had stood several minutes, a servant came up from the street, and taking a key out of his pocket, unlocked the door, and replied to Melbourne's enquiries, that Mrs. Lawson was very ill indeed, and that Miss Dalrymple saw no company. He wrote his name on a slip of paper, and begged it might be immediately conveyed to Miss Dalrymple, and he would wait at the door for a further answer. In a very few minutes the servant returned, and putting him into a little back parlour, told him Miss Dalrymple would wait on him presently. The room he was in bore many traces of Julia's industry and skill; it was full of beautiful drawings, in various kinds, which he contemplated with idolatry; and in one

E 3

corner

corner hung a piece in crayons, a memorial of the first commencement of his acquaintance with Julia; even the scene at Linwood, the lake, the cottages, the forest, the mountains, were all faithfully and ably delineated; and on the banks of the lake, a lad bearing in his arms a girl apparently rescued out of the troubled water. He was gazing on this picture with infinite delight, as a pledge that he was sometimes in his Julia's remembrance, when she entered, unheard by him, and coming close up to him, said, "Let the event recorded in that picture be my apology for the distinction I have made in favour of Mr. Melbourne, after having positively refused to admit any visitors whatever."

Melbourne turned instantly round, and taking the hand of his fair friend, bowed upon it, and ventured to press it to his lips."

"What an alteration, Mr. Melbourne," said she, "since we met last my poor uncle! —as for my dear aunt, she is now in a sweet sleep, though I have no hope that the most favourable

favourable symptom can produce any material amendment."

"A sad change, indeed, Julia!" replied Melbourne. "Oh! Miss Dalrymple, for the death of your worthy uncle I was wholly unprepared; it came upon me like a thunder-bolt, when I called at his house on my arrival in London five days ago."

"You have been returned only five days, and are already come to see me! Melbourne, how ungrateful should I have been had I turned you from my door.—Has not your stay abroad been very much shortened? I understood Lord George was to be absent two or three years!"

Melbourne was doubly electrified by this speech; the kind and friendly manner in which she addressed him by the name of Melbourne, had given him a thrill of joy which the mention of Lord George converted to the most exquisite woe: he replied with some confusion, "Yes, Madam, the Duke had some family reasons for wishing his son to return sooner than he had at first intended,

"And you were disappointed, I dare say, Melbourne," said Julia, "in having your travels cut short. I should think you would both have enjoyed and profited by travelling more than most of our young countrymen. Are you now on your way to Linwood?"

"I am," replied he, "returning to my first, and now, indeed, my only friend; and what will become of me in future, Heaven only knows!"

"You must, at least, banish despondency," said Julia. "At your age, and with your talents, surely, Melbourne, you ought to look forward with hope. May I take the liberty of a friend, and ask to what your future plans are directed?"

"I am flattered," replied Melbourne, "by the enquiry, but I am unable to answer it. I had intended, on my return from abroad, to qualify myself for the church, but I am yet unfit to take orders, and am unable to support the expences of college, till the time when I might be enabled to take a curacy."

coracy. I am now going to consult Mr. Searle; though sometimes I am very strongly tempted to return to the plough, and earn my bread by the sweat of my brow."

It is only," answered Julia, "when you give way to a despondency which I should not hesitate to pronounce criminal, that you can think in that manner, and I am sure Mr. Searle will advise you better. But, tell me, does Lord George Montague abandon his friend?"

"I am certain," said Melbourne, "Lord George would be ever inclined to serve me; but what claim have I on him, or his family, that I should seek assistance from them? indeed, what claim have I ever had to the various kind offices I have all my life received?—I would wish to be dependent no longer."

"I cannot blame your spirit," replied Julia, "and I doubt not but Mr. Searle will advise you for the best. But, tell me, is it true, as I have heard, that the Duke

sent for Lord George home to be married?"

The perfect unconcern with which Julia asked this question, gave Melbourne a pleasing surprise, but he could not, without hesitation, reply, that he was not quite sure;—he believed something had been talked of, but he did not know whether it would ever take place."

"I hope it will," answered Miss Dalrymple; "Lady Susan Dermer is a very amiable young woman, and Lord George deserves her;—they would be very happy together."

Is it possible, thought Melbourne, this woman can love Lord George? Just then a servant opened the door, and trembling violently, and looking as white as a sheet, stood without speaking. Julia started up, "Good God! my aunt is dead!"

"No, Ma'am," said the woman, "but she is very bad—very outrageous.—You must not go up, Ma'am."

"Oh! but I must, said Julia, eagerly."

"Indeed,

"Indeed, Ma'am," said the woman, a little more composed, "you had better not; my mistress is quite light-headed;—quite mad, indeed, for she is so violent, she knows nobody."

"Let me go! let me go!" said Julia to Melbourne, who had taken her hand; and breaking from him, she ran up stairs, and the maid after her. Melbourne remained where he was, till hearing a prodigious noise up stairs, he followed the sound, and entering Mrs. Lawson's room, found the woman unable to keep her down. He gently lifted Julia from the spot where she stood, and joining his strength to their united efforts, they succeeded in laying Mrs. Lawson down in the bed. Exhausted by the violent struggle, she spoke, still raving, but in a calmer tone of voice, and as by degrees she seemed recovering her senses, Melbourne retreated behind the curtain, that she might not be surprised with the sight of a stranger; but in a very few minutes she became again as outrageous as ever, and his assistance was again

E. 6 necessary.

necessary. Julia seemed not to consider him as a stranger, but accepted his services as she would have done those of a brother; but all was in vain—the violence of her struggles entirely exhausted Mrs. Lawson's small remains of strength, and in less than half an hour she expired in the arms of Melbourne. The distress of Julia was extreme, and it was with great difficulty that Melbourne could persuade her to quit the room. She gazed intently on the distorted countenance of her aunt, grasped her cold hand, and clung to her corpse; but after suffering the first emotions of her grief to subside, Melbourne led her to an adjoining apartment, and weeping with her, and joining in her distress, endeavoured to sooth her mind—a task which he knew mere consolatory language would fail to accomplish. Julia was too much absorbed in her sorrow to attend to the propriety of Melbourne's remaining with her, and he, who fancied that his company was some relief to her mind, could not bear the idea of abandoning her to her feelings, and the evening found them

them still together. When he arose to take his leave, he asked her permission to see her the following day, and having obtained it, went to seek his friend Seymour, who had given him his address, and with whom he passed the remainder of the evening. In Seymour he found a friend more congenial to his own turn of mind than he had ever met with, except in Lord George Montague; and now, his heart full of the affecting scene he had just witnessed, he related to him the chief events of his life; and though he endeavoured to pass slightly over those parts respecting Julia Dalrymple, yet Seymour, from sympathy, perhaps, discovered the full extent of his attachment; he even gave Melbourne some flattering hopes of success, as from the manner in which she had mentioned Lord George Montague, it did not appear that her heart was much interested about him. Melbourne was silent at first, but presently replied, "Dear Seymour, flatter me not with hopes which never will be realized. Too many obstacles con-
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cur to prevent my ever laying myself at the
 feet of Miss Dalrymple. In the first place,
 it would be an injury to my friend; and even
 were it possible that Julia could prefer me to
 Lord George, I should feel as if I were acting
 a treacherous part, and invading his prior
 rights. Scarcely could I abandon myself to
 the dear delight of being beloved by her,
 while every sensation of joy that thrilled at my
 heart, would be answered by a pang of sor-
 row through the bosom of my friend. Be-
 sides, what prospects have I to invite the
 lovely Julia to share my fortunes? A beg-
 gar, a dependant, without parents, without
 connexions, without expectations, shall she
 be crushed by the weight of my misfortunes?
 No, Seymour, it will not, it must not be.
 I must not admit such flattering fancies,
 nor do you, my friend, encourage such vain
 and groundless hopes; rather point out to
 me the total impossibility that she ever should
 be mine; I rather, as you counselled in your
 own case, teach me to turn my thoughts on
 - not so much on my own as on the other

other subjects, than foster up vain images of impossible success."

"You may judge very properly, Melbourne," replied his friend, "for if at any future period Happiness should offer her cup to your lips, you will not enjoy the beverage the less for its not being anticipated. Nor is that capricious deity, dame Fortune, less likely to crown your wishes with success, because you do not follow in the train of her perpetual votaries."

In similar conversation they passed the small remainder of the evening, and separated more than ever, pleased with each other. In the morning, as her solitary breakfast, and whole day, as he passed himself in voluntary gleam of pleasure brightened as he entered the room. She received him with much cordiality, and thanked him in the most engaging manner for the friendly assistance he had afforded her the preceding day, adding, "Indeed, Mr. Melbourne, I ought to apologize for having suffered you

CHAP. VII.

FRIENDLY ENQUIRIES.

THE following morning saw Melbourne very early at the door of the house inhabited by Julia Dalrymple, whom he found seated pensive at her solitary breakfast, and on whose pallid face he flattered himself an involuntary gleam of pleasure brightened as he entered the room. She received him with much cordiality, and thanked him in the most engaging manner for the friendly assistance he had afforded her the preceding day, adding, "Indeed, Mr. Melbourne, I ought to apologize for having suffered you

to execute so painful a task, but my heart was too full to attend to punctilios."

"Never be they remembered between us!" replied Melbourne, with an enthusiasm he could not repress; "we have been friends too long to think of forms."

"You are going immediately to Linwood, are you not, Mr. Melbourne?" said Julia.

"If by staying here any length of time," he replied, "I can be of the smallest service to you, dear Julia, you have only to command me. You will have many things, and of an unpleasant nature, to attend to, and perhaps I might be fortunate enough to be able to assist you."

"Were I to follow only my own inclination," replied Julia, "I should not perhaps hesitate to accept the services you offer; but my poor aunt has lived in this town for many years in habits of intimacy with several respectable people, to whom she has always charged me to apply on such an occasion as this, which of course she has frequently looked forward

forward to. To them, therefore, I must apply; but perhaps when you return from Linwood, I may not have left this place."

"Your intention, then," said Melbourne, "is not to reside at York?"

"Alas!" said Julia, "my future prospects are not of the most pleasing nature. At my age, it would not be prudent to live alone, and I have therefore accepted an offer made me by my cousin Matilda, (who, I suppose you have heard, is going to be married), of forming part of her family. Ah! Melbourne, how different would have been our situations had we not lost my dear uncle!—Pardon me for including you."

"Indeed, dear Julia," said Melbourne, "it is a loss I shall ever regret, and am proud to be associated with you."

"Had he lived," pursued Julia, "what a pleasant asylum would he have offered to my unprotected youth; and how would he have led you forward through every difficulty till he had placed you in a permanent and proper situation; but the pursuits, the inclinations

tions of my cousins are very different. Would I could ever suppose Matilda my friend! but even in our childhood, as you may well know, Melbourne, she had no affection, no kindness for me, nor has her subsequent conduct proved any alteration in her heart.— Do you know Mr. Trebison?"

"I knew him slightly at college," replied Melbourne, "and perhaps I ought to tell you that he is the last man in the world to whom I would entrust the care of female youth. Without principle, without the least restraint on his inclinations, he has no respect for women, nor is his future wife, I fear, at all calculated to correct his opinions."

"And yet, Melbourne," said Julia, laying her hand on his arm, "what can I do? At seventeen I am very unfit to live by myself, even were it in my power."

"Dear Julia," said Melbourne, "fear nothing; your own prudence, your own quick feeling, will protect you, and it will not be long that you will remain in so unpleasant a situation. You will mix with society,

society, Julia," continued he, gazing in her face, "you will be seen, and known, and loved, and you will soon find a protector more congenial than the Trebisons."

Julia changed colour, and withdrew her hand; and Melbourne added, "But I am a very unfit adviser, Miss Dalrymple.—May I ask if you go immediately to Miss Macartney?"

"I had rather hope not," said Julia, "till she is married. If, as I expect, the Willis's give me an invitation, I shall certainly accept it; so that I may still be in this neighbourhood when you return from Linwood."

"May I not construe that into a permission to enquire after you when I do return," said Melbourne.

"Surely, Melbourne," said she, "you would not have waited for a formal permission—my first friend, the preserver of my life, my brother in affliction. —"

"Dear Julia," interrupted Melbourne, with warmth, "how —" and then he hesitated, he blushed, and ceased.

Julia

Julia rose, and walked to the window. Melbourne remained seated, leaning his head on his hand; and feeling that he had been on the point of betraying himself, dared not trust himself to speak again. The silence continued unbroken for some minutes, and he began to think of taking leave, when looking round at Julia, he perceived her in tears. Respecting her sorrows he spoke not, but rising, took her hand, and led her to the sofa; when, as he retired from her, he ventured to press her hand to his lips; and taking his hat, would have made his bow, but Julia said, "Are you going, Mr. Melbourne? How long shall you be absent?"

"Totally uncertain as to my future destination," replied he, "I cannot tell when I shall return, or what will become of me; but suffer me to assure you, Miss Dalrymple, that in all situations, whether prosperous or unfortunate, I shall ever retain the warmest wishes for your welfare, and the strongest remembrance of your kindness."

"Melbourne,"

"Melbourne," said she, "what a parting! how sad, and how solemn! just now you asked my permission to revisit me — now you seem never to expect to see me again."

"Pardon my inconsistency," replied he, "uncertain as I am, the child of chance and of misfortune, I can only answer for my feelings. Circumstances may throw me for ever at a distance from Miss Dalrymple. I have some thoughts of entering on board a fleet of discovery, which is now preparing to sail, and then——"

"I hope not, Melbourne," replied Julia, "and yet why should I hope not? it is an active and perhaps a beneficial line."

"Of the advantages of discovery to the world at large, and more particularly to the objects of its search," answered Melbourne, "I am also much inclined to doubt. That it enlarges the minds, and perhaps softens the hearts of some individuals engaged in it, is I think unquestionable; but at least it will be so far of advantage to me, as it will prevent my

my being a burthen on friends too incapable of supporting any additional expence."

As Melbourne yet stood with his hat in his hand, preparing to depart, the door opened, and Miss Willis was announced. She went up to Julia with a look of cordial affection, and seating herself beside her, said, "My dear girl, I have this instant heard of your loss, and come to take you from a scene ill suited to your feelings; you must return with me, and withdraw yourself from this house."

"Not immediately, dear Caroline," answered Julia; "I feel all your friendship, but a thousand circumstances, a thousand feelings prevent my leaving this place for some days."

"My sweet Julia," said Miss Willis, "how truly I share in your affliction; you who know my heart will readily judge! Come then with me; you shall not be controuled; your tears shall have free leave to flow; you know my mother's indulgence."

replied Melbourne, "and indeed I think

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"I do

"I do know, and have often experienced," said Julia, "the indulgence and kindness of your whole amiable family; but, indeed, my Caroline, I cannot for some days, consistently with my own feelings, (for I am really not guided by mere outward forms), leave this desolated mansion."

Mr. Melbourne endeavoured to quit the room unperceived, but Miss Willis said, "Surely that is Mr. Melbourne!—persuade my friend, Sir, to accept my offer; she has a great deference for your opinion."

"It is, indeed, Mr. Melbourne," replied Julia, "who came here by chance yesterday, being only just returned from abroad, about half an hour before I lost my poor aunt; and indeed his company has been of infinite service to me."

"Be my advocate, Mr. Melbourne," said Miss Willis, "and I will bribe you with a permission to come and see Miss Dalrymple at Holts as often as you can."

"Your offers are very flattering to me," replied Melbourne, "and, indeed, I think
Miss

Miss Dalrymple could not do better than to quit this abode."

"There, Julia, you hear what Mr. Melbourne says," said Miss Willis.

"Press me no further, dear Caroline," answered Julia, "believe me, it is impossible; in a week I will with pleasure obey your summons."

"Then," said Miss Willis, "for that week I will be your guest, for alone in this house you positively shall not stay."

Julia looked her thanks, and resting her head on her friend's shoulder, gave free vent to her tears. Melbourne still remained standing, but Miss Willis made him a sign to take a seat, and he obeyed her silent orders. When Julia recovered a little, her friend gently soothed her, and by degrees brought her into a frame of mind to bear a more general conversation, which gradually became rather more cheerful, owing to the well-timed endeavours of Miss Willis, who at length so far overcame her friend's dejection, as to tell her she had heard that her

quondam lover, Lord George Montague, would not marry Lady Susan Dermer."

"My lover," said Julia, "you joke."

"No, indeed," replied Miss Willis, "I could plainly enough see his admiration of you when he was at the races, and it is very certain that he has refused to marry Lady Susan."

"He does wrong," said Julia, "Lady Susan is very amiable."

"And his father is very resolute," replied Miss Willis, "I do not apprehend he will give up a point his heart is so interested in."

"I fear he will not," said Melbourne, "even where the happiness of his excellent son is concerned."

"Do you know Lord George Montague?" said Miss Willis, with quickness.

"Most intimately," replied Melbourne, "he was my greatest friend both at Eton and at College; and we are just returned from the Continent together."

"And is not the Duke a most inflexible man?" asked Miss Willis; "I am sure he always

always looks so stern, I tremble before him, though he is nothing to me."

"Indeed," said Melbourne, "I fear he is most inflexible."

"And I dare say," said Miss Willis, smiling, "you know how tenderly Lord George loves Julia,—do you not?—but come," said she, "I won't teach you to betray secrets."

"There are none to betray, Caroline," said Julia, "it is your fancy alone has conjured up this mighty phantom of love."

The conversation taking by degrees a different turn, Melbourne again arose, reached his hat, and having received a general invitation from Miss Willis, made his bow to the fair friends, and tore himself, with a heart more enamoured than ever, from the presence of his Julia. On the morrow he sought Mr. Seymour, and having taken a cordial leave of him, quitted York, and proceeded towards the abode of his early youth, hoping there to regain

that peace of mind, that unconscious quiet, and careless gaiety, which had ever been his companions at Linwood.

CHAP. VIII.

OLD FRIENDS.

MELBOURNE was received by the worthy inhabitants of Linwood with that amiable cordiality which speaks so true a welcome; and for some days thought he had found out the only means of recovering his lost serenity. By degrees, however, as the first effusion of joy for his return began to wear away, he thought he perceived a sensible alteration in Mr. and Miss Searles; instead of that uniform cheerful content, he saw, with regret, occasional

sional clouds of dejection, and found their spirits sometimes oppressed with languor even to tears. He thought at first that they had sustained some recent misfortune, but he found at length that they were fallen into an habitual dependency. As long as Melbourne had continued to reside with them, they had not felt the increased weight of years, but since his departure, they had grown suddenly old. Deprived of their interesting and perpetual occupation, they felt a vacancy in their hours, ill supplied by any new amusements. They were really eighteen years older than when they first took the charge of Melbourne; the real infirmities of age began to press upon them, and to add to these, Miss Searle was actually recovering very slowly from a dangerous illness, which had left very unpleasant remains of weakness and increased delicacy, and which had drained their purse of more than their superfluous cash. Mr. Searle had the discomfort to see the faithful partner of his life in need of little indulgences which he was

wholly unable to procure for her; and though the inhabitants of Linwood would have strained every nerve to oblige their worthy pastor, the superfluities she wanted were not to be procured in the village, and beyond its boundaries the humble fame of Mr. Searle extended not. He felt too, that at his more advanced age he stood in need of rather more society, and felt perhaps something like disappointment that he had never obtained that further preferment in his profession which he was conscious he had not ill deserved. That he was in debt half his annual income, was a heavy addition to the weight which pressed upon his spirits; nor could the reflections on an useful and well-spent life entirely relieve his mind from the oppression he laboured under. Often would he say to his sister, "And yet, my dear Mary, we have done all we could in the humble sphere assigned to us. We have added to the comforts of our parishioners, and we have rescued one superior being from

the oblivion to which adverse fortune seemed to have doomed him."

These reflections, though they threw a bright gloom over their evening hours, could not wholly dissipate the clouds of real misfortune—of age, infirmity, and poverty. Nor was the hopeless situation of Melbourne at all calculated to brighten the gloom. Mr. Searle saw with regret, talents so superior, and understanding so cultivated, destitute of that employment where they would have been eminently brilliant and useful; yet such was his fondness, perhaps a little ill-judged, for the pupil he had formed, that he could not bear the idea of the voyage of discovery which Melbourne had slightly hinted to him, but had wholly relinquished on Mr. Searle's symptoms of disapprobation. Perhaps it had never met with his own hearty concurrence, and had been adopted rather as a dernier resort, than as a favourite scheme. With Mr. Searle, then, Melbourne remained in inactivity. He saw so plainly the impossibility of his continuing to pursue his theolo-

gical studies, that he forebore to mention his favourite and original plan; and finding, or fancying, that his company served now and then to exhilarate the spirits of his excellent friends, he staid quietly at Linwood, though not without an earnest desire to discover some line of conduct which would enable him to assist Mr. Searle. Opportunities offered not at Linwood; days swelled into weeks, and weeks became months, and Melbourne was no nearer the having formed any plan than when he first left the Continent. What plan, indeed, could he form? Without money, without friends, without connexions, or knowledge of the world, what project could he adopt with any reasonable hopes of success? The navy and army were peculiarly repugnant to his feelings,—not to his personal courage, for of that Melbourne had a sufficient share, but he had advanced from childhood to youth with views and wishes totally opposite. To be a Minister of the religion of peace was his first wish, and his ultimate plan was to apply to Lord George Montague

Montague for the necessary assistance; but his unwillingness to take this step had deferred it from day to day, till three months had elapsed in total languor and inactivity, when he was suddenly roused from this torpor by the receipt of the following letter from Lord George Montague:

“ TO MR. MELBOURNE.

“ Have you entirely forgotten me, Melbourne? Is our early friendship vanished like all the other fair prospects of my youth? Was it only as ‘the early dew?’ and am I no longer to be cheered by the voice of affection? You left me in trouble, and I do not think I am become happier. My fondest hopes are blasted, and I am on the point of committing an injustice to a most deserving woman. Is it not an injustice, Melbourne, to profess, to vow an affection, which the heart obstinately refuses to feel? I found my father inflexible,—you feared he would be so. Alas! he knew not Julia Dalrymple! I was introduced to Lady Susan Dormer, I found

found her amiable, estimable, lovely, and fatally prepossessed in my favour. My coldness did not offend her; she received me at all times with the cheerful ease of an excellent wife assured of her husband's love; yet I made no declaration, I even gave no oblique hints of a passion which did not exist! Led away by the madness of my love for Julia, I wrote her a long incoherent rhapsody; I told her how I was circumstanced; madness only could have blinded me to the consequences of my ingenuousness; and telling her also the violence of my attachment, I besought her to meet me half way in the strange plan I had laid down, and give me her hand clandestinely. Good Heavens! what an answer I received! what sweetness, what sense, what dignity! while it for ever crushed my hopes, it has strengthened my esteem, my admiration, my adoration of her beyond all bounds. Read it, Melbourne; I enclose you the treasure, for nothing but the letter itself can give you an idea of her worth, and justify the ardency of my

my passion. My fond expectations blasted in that quarter, I am striving to obey my Julia's commands; yes, I am about to sacrifice myself to the wishes of my family, to give to Lady Susan a worthless hand, and to devote the remainder of my life to unavailing regret. Yet, Melbourne, from one quarter I promise myself more satisfaction—I still lean on your friendship for my chief support, and in the fond hope of raising your merit to its proper level in life, try to find an alleviation to the pangs inflicted by disappointment.

“Come then to me, my friend, come and witness the sacrifice I make, and support me in my resolution to act with fortitude under it; to conceal for ever from Lady Susan the unmerited return her affection meets with; to masque under fallacious smiles the agonies of my heart; to cease to think of —. Ah! no, when I cease to think of her, I shall surely think no more. Come, my friend, and let me pour my last complaints into your sympathizing bosom, for

in a very few days my lips will be sealed for ever. Oh! Heaven! in ten days I shall be — I cannot say what; but I am, and ever shall be, your's truly,

"MONTAGUE."

Enclosed in the above was the following letter, which Melbourne read with feelings little short of adoration; feelings so intense, as for awhile to absorb the sense of Lord George's melancholy situation.

"TO LORD GEORGE MONTAGUE."

Your letter, my Lord, I have received and read, I may say studied, with extreme surprise and sorrow. That you love me, I regret sincerely, honoured as I am by your preference; but, alas! my Lord, your love cannot be built on a very deep foundation, for little indeed can you know the heart of Julia Dalrymple, if you could for a moment imagine it possible for her to agree to your proposals. — A clandestine marriage — an act of flagrant disobedience to your family — a dishonourable

dishonourable desertion of a lovely and deserving woman—shall it be Julia Dalrymple who encourages you, who shares in the turpitude of these actions? But let me forbear to reproach you; you are unhappy, and need more the soothing tones of pity, than the exasperating voice of reprehension. Your own heart, good and worthy by nature, will soon shew you your error, and you will readily conform to the wishes of your family; you will controul a boyish transient fancy; and will settle your firm affections where they are so well deserved, and will be so well received. You say you cannot but see that Lady Susan looks on you without reluctance as the future partner of her life; and can you disappoint her innocent and well-placed attachment? Can you consign a beautiful and amiable woman to incurable dejection, and hopeless disappointment? But your own excellent disposition will tell you all this with more effect than my weak pen can do. But in order to assist you in the proper career you are going to run, I will be
ingenuous,

ingenuous, and believing you sincere (though misjudging) in your professions of affection to me, I will candidly tell you, that were you absolutely free from any engagements whatever, perfectly at liberty to chuse for yourself, and uncontrouled by any will but your own, Julia Dalrymple would not be your's. Your worth she knows and esteems; your amiable and agreeable qualities she acknowledges and admires; but the perfect ease and unconcern with which she has ever heard your oblique hints of love, and with which she has read your passionate epistle, (except feeling a sincere regret for your uneasiness) speak too plainly the utter impossibility of her ever feeling for you more than the affection of a friend—of a sister. Believe me, my Lord, in this I cannot be mistaken. Nourish, therefore, no fallacious hopes that your perseverance may effect any change in her heart; your prudent obedience to your father's will, and the subsequent good conduct you will undoubtedly maintain, will confirm and strengthen that esteem which an obstinate
persistence

peristence in your affections for her would only tend ultimately to destroy. Be therefore her esteemed, her valued friend, become the happy husband of Lady Susan Dermer, and pardon the freedom of my advice. I have written thus candidly entirely to destroy any remains of a fantastic hope of which a very few years will shew you the impropriety; and am, with much esteem, and unfeigned good wishes, your Lordship's grateful and sincere friend,

JULIA DALRYMPLE."

Melbourne read, and marvelled at the sense, the dignity, and propriety of so young a female. He found also an inexhaustible source of comfort in the letter of Julia, for he felt perfectly convinced that she did not love Lord George. He approved of her candour, and thought it the best possible mode of inducing his friend to comply with the wishes of his family. "A prudent young woman," said Melbourne to himself, "would perhaps, even if she loved Lord George, have

have combated and declined his proposals; but would she have used the same prevailing arguments? would she not, in the midst of her reasonings, have intermingled some fears for the consequences of his conduct to his own future welfare? and by expressing too much interest for him, would she not have counterbalanced all the arguments she had brought to induce him to relinquish her? but the steady dignity, the candour, and good sense of Julia's letter, prove her to be—how far above my praises!"

He communicated to Mr. Searle the earnest and repeated requests of Lord George, that he would go to him; and that worthy man, ever anxious to promote the welfare and future advantage of Melbourne, pressed his immediate departure. Of his friend's melancholy, he forbore to speak, not thinking himself at liberty to disclose secrets of so delicate a nature, and which an approaching event would render it highly proper to bury in perpetual oblivion; but he sincerely sympathized with Lord George in the sorrow he expressed,

expressed, and acknowledged that he could not imagine a more agonizing fate than being forced to relinquish Julia Dalrymple. Her letter was dated from London, therefore he concluded that Miss Macartney was become Mrs. Trebison, and that Julia had left York to reside with her cousin. As his finances were none of the highest, he therefore contented himself with writing to Seymour an account of his removal from Linwood, and without any further delay took the nearest road to London.

CHAP. IX.

NEW FRIENDS.

OUR hero was received at G—— Castle by the Duke and Dutchess with a much colder politeness than they had shewn him previous to his continental tour; there was very little variation in the manner of Lord S—— towards him, but the warmth and cordiality of Lord George's friendship made him ample amends. When the first compliments were over, Lord George took him to walk in a retired part of the park, and there unbosomed his sorrows to the friend of his heart. Melbourne heard his complaints with sympathy and tenderness, soothed him with

with kindness and gentleness, and tried to bring his mind into a state of more firm endurance.

"Indeed, my dear Lord," said Melbourne, "you must endeavour to look with more philosophy and fortitude upon your fate. Engaged, as you are, in three days to become the husband of Lady Susan, it is impossible to retract; and to what end would you retract? You have the most positive assurances that were every obstacle removed, Julia Dalrymple would not be your's; her whole letter is a proof of this assertion. The ease and calmness which run through the whole, are incompatible not only with love, but even with that kind of sympathy which could ever become love! Debarred, therefore, from hope on the side of your inclination, do, my friend, endeavour to view the fairest side of your destiny. The pledge and bond of a new-born amity between two noble houses, connected with one of the first families in the kingdom by your union with a lovely and amiable woman, assured of her tender and innocent attachment,

ment,

ment, and acknowledging her to be such as an unprejudiced heart could not view without partiality, let not the single, though the emphatic *but* you can oppose to these advantages, sour the remainder of your life, and tarnish every prospect. Be yourself, my Lord; cast far from you this unmanly dejection; rouse every noble spirit into action; and rise superior to the fetters of a rejected love."

"Oh! Melbourne," replied Lord George, "it is easy for a disengaged heart to reason thus. I acknowledge the justness of your arguments, but where was ever heard the eloquence that could talk down a real passion?"

"A real passion, my dear Lord George," answered Melbourne, "must necessarily languish without hope! Tell me, honestly, what hope can you reasonably entertain, that were your present trammels broken, Julia Dalrymple would ever accept your love? tell me, my Lord —."

"Oh no!" exclaimed Lord George, "I have no hope—I can imagine none; the

dignity,

dignity, the purity of her character would for ever reject me; and the calm firmness with which she reasons — Oh! Melbourne, what an angel must I relinquish! yet, surely, to love like mine she could not always be inexorable: would not my patient perseverance some time or other win her partial smile?"

"What do you think, my friend," said Melbourne, "if you have a hope, your Melbourne will cherish it, and assist your endeavours? if not, esteem it an act of friendship to try to reconcile you to your fate."

"Alas! it is inevitable!" replied Lord George, "I have no hope; and if I had, could I, ought I, to desert Lady Susan at the point of marriage? Yet ought I not rather to break with her even at the altar, than injure her so grossly as to give her my hand without my heart?"

"If it were not certain," said Melbourne, "that love cannot subsist eternally without hope, and if it were not more than probable that Lady Susan's charms would soon win
you

you to herself alone, I would desist from offering any further argument; but do——”

“Indeed,” interrupted Lord George, “were I now to break with Lady Susan, no woman of honour would receive me; how much less then could I hope from the high spirit and dignified delicacy of Julia Dalrymple?”

“True, my friend,” replied Melbourne, “and in Julia’s letter you have the best cure for your unfortunate passion—obey this beloved mistress, devote your time, your heart to Lady Susan; and the internal consciousness of propriety, which ever guides your actions, will necessarily lead you to confine your thoughts to her alone. This necessity, only to be felt by noble minds, the urgency of acting aright, will soon detach you from a mistress who rejects you, and give you wholly to a wife who loves you; then, my Lord, how will Lady Susan’s merits rise upon you!”

“Oh Heavens! Melbourne,” exclaimed Lord George, “and in three days this
necessity

necessity will begin—in three days it will be a crime to think of Julia. The same morning will also light my brother to his nuptials; happy Charles! Lady Selina Frederick has long been his election. With what different sensations shall we approach the altar! Lord S—— exulting in his felicity, panting with expectation, and rioting in delight—your wretched friend, led like a lamb to the slaughter, pronouncing with trembling lips, a reluctant vow, which at the same moment, his heart refuses to ratify.”

“It must not be thus, my friend,” replied Melbourne; “you must conquer this reluctance, and bow to the yoke of unappeasable necessity. Shall Lord George Montague, the mirror of the age, whom every young man seeks to imitate, shall he sink desponding under a first disappointment? You are young; you have many years to look forward to, and many happy ones they will be, if you do not waywardly yield to the bent of inclination. Who has ever been sufficiently fortunate to have all their wishes granted?

And

And how many, especially of the weaker sex, set you an example of heroism under your own peculiar misfortune! How many hapless virgins are sacrificed to dissolute old age!—to penurious avarice!—to disease and imbecility! and support their fate with unshaken fortitude, while, perhaps, their hearts, formed to feel all the tenderness of love, glow with unceasing ardour for some forbidden object! And shall you, a man of spirit, of reason, of philosophy, sink under a disappointment which a tender girl can support?”

“All this is very true, my friend,” replied Lord George, “and I confess you are in the right; but put yourself in my place—imagine yourself passionately, fervently attached to Julia Dalrymple, and then, if you can, imagine the agonies of my mind; but you know not, Melbourne, you cannot imagine the emotions of love;—what it is to bend all your wishes and desires to one dear object; to have her, and her only in view as the end and crown of every exertion; to
unite

unite in fancy her fate to your own; to look forward to the endearing fondness of the wife, the amiable affection of the mother. Oh! my friend, if you knew what it was to love like me, you would confess the difficulty of relinquishing its object."

The appeal was a strong one, and Melbourne felt it forcibly.—"Imagine yourself in love with Julia Dalrymple!" Oh Heavens! what a picture had Lord George conjured up to the view of his suffering friend. Melbourne summoned up resolution to utter a few more consolatory sentences, as he accompanied Lord George back to the house; and when retired to his apartment to dress, revolved in his mind the topic they had been discussing together. His advice to his friend had been perfectly reasonable and just, and such as any indifferent person would have given; and Melbourne, while he spoke to Lord George, felt perfectly disinterested. Lost in his friendship and sympathy, he forgot his own attachment to Julia Dalrymple, and when he said, that were there a hope

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remaining, he would be the first to encourage and assist that hope, he spoke in perfect sincerity, and would actually have sacrificed his own happiness to have secured that of his friend. The interest of Julia too was concerned; and Melbourne felt convinced, from the calmness of her reasoning, that her heart was not attached to Lord George, so that their union would not ultimately have promoted the happiness of either party. All this occurred to Melbourne without any mixture of selfishness; but when his friend made so forcible an appeal to his heart, he reproached himself for all he had said, as if it had arisen from concealed views of advantage to himself. He weighed over and over again the arguments he had used, and though he could not but acknowledge their justice, he feared he had urged them too harshly, and, in the bitterness of his soul, he fancied he could never have the heart to profit by the disappointment of his friend, if ever any unforeseen accident should put an union with Miss Dalrymple within his reach. He
lamented

lamented the fate which had made him a rival to his dearest friend; wished a thousand times he had betrayed himself when first Lord George entrusted him with the secret of his attachment; and a thousand times wished he felt indifferent to Julia.—Indifferent to Julia! what an idea! He fully comprehended the extreme reluctance Lord George expressed to the most distant hint of another attachment. He acknowledged to himself that he believed it would be wholly impossible to transfer to a new object that affection, that tenderness he felt for Julia, yet he resolved to make the experiment, and at least to endeavour to root out the passion she had inspired. “And indeed,” said he, “to what end should I cherish it? if it be indeed true, that love cannot subsist without hope, on what a slight foundation will a lover raise the fairy superstructure! Lord George, within three days of becoming the husband of another woman, is not more completely devoid of any reasonable hope of ever possessing Julia, than I am; yet I

still love, and still cherish I know not what unfounded fantasy, that since no insuperable barrier is placed between us, such as the marriage of either party, it is yet possible that fortune may so far favour me as to destine for me the inestimable prize of her lovely hand:—Good God! what a romantic idea! that I, Melbourne, an isolated individual, should ever dare to associate to my fortunes the amiable, the adored Miss Dalrymple. No, Melbourne, abandon for ever the delusive hope, and remember, that however necessary it may be for Lord George to relinquish his pretensions, it is equally incumbent on you to forego your chimeras, since, were it possible they could ever be realized, it would be ungenerous to take advantage of the misfortune of a friend. Suffer, Melbourne, but suffer without forfeiting your character for integrity. Were you now to avow your love, all your advice would be imputed to partiality, your own interest would appear to have outweighed that of your friend, and your own internal consciousness
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of integrity, of disinterested sympathy, would but little avail you."

These reflections and resolutions, together with the dejection of Lord George, contributed but ill to fit Melbourne's spirits for the scenes of festivity already begun. The preceding evening had been spent at the house of Lady Selina's father; this evening was allotted to Dermer House; and the following one, that immediately preceded the marriage, all the families were to assemble at G—— Castle. Had not Melbourne known and loved Julia Dalrymple, he would have felt more wonder that his friend could resist the unaffected beauty, the innocent affection of Lady Susan Dermer, far more beautiful than Julia; if she possessed not her superior judgment, her chastened dignity, her manners were full of delicacy and sweetness, perfectly natural and easy, and her lovely countenance expressed the most habitual mildness. Taught to look on Lord George Montague as her future husband, she felt for him, and sought not to conceal the ten-

derest affection; a glow of pleasure animated her sweet face whenever he addressed her, or whenever any thing occurred in conversation that could, however remotely, be applied as praise to him. Wholly unaware of any failure in his attachment, her full contentment shewed itself in every look—in every gesture. Melbourne, as well as he could, pointed out to his friend the characteristic merits of Lady Susan; particularly noticed the youthful beauty of her form, the unblown delicacy of her manners. Lord George could not deny her perfection; he could not deny that her eye was lighted up by the purest love when she smiled on him; and he acknowledged her unsuspecting confidence in his affection as a peculiar blessing.

“Nor will my friend,” said Melbourne, in a whisper, as they sat on a sofa apart from the company, “nor will my dear Lord George wrong this amiable, this engaging security; his heart will soon do full justice to his lovely bride; and his Melbourne’s

bourne's warmest wishes for his felicity will be fulfilled."

At that instant Lady Susan approached them; a delicate colour suffused her fair face as she passed by them into another room, though she spoke not. In a few moments she returned, and Lord George rising, took her hand, and entreated her to accept of a seat with them. She complied with blushes, and listened with so much sweetness to all he said, addressed Mr. Melbourne with so much kindness, as the friend of her husband, and betrayed so unequivocally her fondness for Lord George, that he was compelled to acknowledge himself fortunate above his deserts.

"Indeed, my friend," said Melbourne, when they were alone, at night, "indeed, my friend, if you will but exert a small portion of that good sense Heaven has blessed you with, I may venture to prophesy more felicity from your union with Lady Susan, than from many marriages entered into with more promising auspices. Even
G 4 your

your brother's envied match appears to me less likely to promote his happiness than your's with all its disadvantage; he has so long fixed on Lady Selina, and every thing has so long been arranged between them, that already coldness and inattention have taken place of tenderness and gallantry. The watch which you will ever keep over your conscious heart, will preserve you from falling into careless habits, and you will find your pleasures hourly increasing. Lady Selina is indeed a lovely woman, but Lady Selina knows too much of life—is too much a fashionist."

"And who shall ensure me that Lady Susan will not become so when introduced into the world as a married woman?" said Lord George; "many of these innocents become the greatest dashers when their restraints are taken away."

"Fie, my Lord!" replied Melbourne, "I have never heard from you words so unbecoming. You may be your own security for Lady Susan's retaining her innocent simplicity,

plicity, for never will she immerse herself in fashionable pleasures, unless you disappoint the tenderness of her heart. If, indeed, you force her to seek amusements out of her own house, it is possible the torrent of dissipation might corrupt her heart, but if it does, the blame will rest with you."

"Dear Melbourne," said Lord George, "pardon the waywardness of an oppressed heart; I subscribe to the justness of your reflections, and I will endeavour so to regulate my conduct, as that you shall not reproach me."

"Let your own heart be your monitor," replied Melbourne; "if that does not reproach you, you need not fear that I shall; nor will it I am sure. My excellent friend will act up to his duty; he knows it, and will obey it; and soon, soon will he find Pleasure its constant attendant."

Lord George pressed Melbourne's hand with sincere affection as they parted for the night. The following day passed like the preceding one; and the morning arose which

was to witness the nuptials of Lord S—— and his brother. Melbourne thought it best to leave his friend to his own reflections on so important an occasion, knowing that he was competent to judge and to act with propriety; but about an hour previous to that which was to unite him to Lady Susan, Lord George sent for Melbourne, who spared no pains to confirm the good resolutions and wavering spirits of the bridegroom. At length the two families arrived at G—— Castle, as it was agreed the double marriage should be solemnized in the family chapel. Lady Selina looked much as usual—all spirits and gaiety. Lady Susan was all blushes, and more lovely than ever. Lord S—— and his bride were first dispatched, and Lord George immediately afterwards was united to Lady Susan. The compliments usual on such occasions being over, the parties separated; each family returning home, and the two new married couples each retiring to the residences that had been prepared for them. Melbourne accompanied his friend, and, indeed,

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indeed, his presence was almost indispensably necessary for too frequently dejection was beginning to appear in Lord George's countenance, but the care, the attention of his friend either checked it in its commencement, or diverted the notice of Lady Susan Montague. But two days only elapsed before Lord George betrayed symptoms that seriously alarmed both his wife and his friend, who earnestly besought him to call in some medical assistance; but he assured them his indisposition was very trivial, and endeavouring really to shake it off, quieted their apprehensions for the present, and the day passed on as usual; but on the morning of the fourth day from his marriage, the agitated Lord George was in a high fever. Lady Susan flew with eagerness to Melbourne, and besought him to send for assistance, and to give those orders she, from her inexperience and alarm, was incapable of giving. They were twelve miles from a physician, and thirty from G—— Castle; but messengers were immediately dispatched to each, and Mel-

bourne and Lady Susan waited the arrival of the physician, in the apartment of Lord George, with an impatience to which words cannot do justice. The symptoms of fever encreased, and their alarms became proportionably greater; but as he was perfectly aware of all that passed, they both endeavoured to conceal the agitation of their minds. At length he fell into a kind of stupor, in which he remained till Dr. Lewson arrived, who betrayed strong symptoms of apprehension when he heard every particular described; and having given very strict orders for the treatment of his patient, promised to call again in a few hours. The affectionate Lady Susan never quitted the bed-side of her beloved husband; and while Melbourne endeavoured to lighten her burthen, he discovered in her such a fund of real worth, that he felt more hope than ever that his friend would one day recover real happiness. The horrible stupor which oppressed Lord George still continued, and Dr. Lewson, on his second visit, expressing
a very

a very strong desire to have it removed, he ordered very stimulating applications, and bade Lady Susan not to be alarmed at the violence of the effect they might take, as any crisis was preferable to the state in which the patient now lay. Having as much as possible forewarned them against every possible change these medicines might occasion, and given them ample directions how to proceed in every case, the doctor again took his leave, with a promise of seeing them very early in the morning; it was now late in the evening, and if by twelve o'clock the applications had failed to remove the torpor, he had directed them to be renewed, and their strength encreased. Lady Susan and Melbourne continued to watch with increasing agitation the looks and motions of their nursling; and about an hour before the time appointed, thought they perceived symptoms of the stupor abating; they now gazed with redoubled earnestness on the suffering patient, who after a few faint struggles, raised himself up in the bed, and fixing his glaring eyes
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on Lady Susan, said, "It was very kind of you to come, Julia, but you should have been here yesterday.—I was married this morning.—Oh, misery! my wife! my wife! Julia, why are not you my wife?"

Lady Susan, appalled at these heart-breaking expressions, gazed on Melbourne, whose ghost-like paleness and blue lips too plainly spoke his participation of the fatal secret thus divulged in the hollow tones of delirium. She supported herself, however, and only uttered a faint exclamation, when Lord George went on; "You pity me, Julia, but your pity comes too late! yet I thank you for your pity—would it had been love!"

Melbourne, ready to sink into the earth, now approached Lady Susan, and would have led her into an adjoining room, but she resisted his attempts, saying, "There is nothing more to fear, Sir." Lord George perceived what they were about, and turning fiercely to Melbourne, said, "Do not take her from me! I know you will tell me I ought not to see her, because I am married,

ried, but my wife will never know it.—Wife! wife! wife!" repeated he, several times, and then darting a furious look at them, he hid himself under the bed clothes.

Melbourne, dreadfully appalled by this unfortunate discovery, gazed as it were by stealth on the varying countenance of Lady Susan; when seeing her turn pale and stagger, he caught her in his arms, and supported her to the window. The pure breath of heaven recalled her fleeting spirits; she made a strong effort to recover herself, and looking at Melbourne with a mournful, but kind expression in her face, she said, "You are much in my Lord's confidence, Mr. Melbourne—this is no moment for dissimulation; at a more convenient opportunity I shall beg half an hour's conversation with you." She now moved again towards the bed; Lord George again lifted up his head; his countenance was less wild, but more languid than before, and they were apprehensive of his relapsing into the stupor. Lady Susan now, with the calmness of a heroine, gave

gave him with her own hands the medicine directed by Dr. Lewson, and in a quarter of an hour he spoke rationally. "My dear Lady Susan," said he, pressing to his lips the fair hand that grasped his feverish one, "how kind you are; but your delicate frame will suffer from your kindness to me. Melbourne, persuade this dear creature to retire to rest"

"Imagine not, my dear Lord," replied Lady Susan, in a composed voice, "that I should get any rest while I knew you to be thus unwell; the best cordial, the best refreshment I can take, is to see you a little better."

"I am better, I must be better," replied Lord George, "with such attendance."

"You must not, however," said Melbourne, "exhaust yourself by talking;—you have already spoken too much."

A deep and conscious sigh from Lady Susan pointed out the appropriate meaning of these words; and Melbourne too, well aware of the distress she suffered, besought her

her to quit the chamber, and take a little rest; but she told him she was certain he already knew her too well not to be assured that the best cordial she could take was, as she had told George, the constant care she could devote to him, and the knowledge of every symptom of amendment, however slight. She remained, therefore, in the chamber of her husband, not having, as well as Melbourne, quitted it for more than four or five minutes at a time, till the doctor revisited his patient at a very early hour the next morning. He acknowledged him to be much amended, but freely owned that there was yet much to come which medical skill could not prevent. The fever had been so violent, he said, that it had taken very deep hold of his constitution, and there was every reason to fear that its effects would be felt for a very long time. "Therefore, my good Lady Susan," added he, "you must allow me the liberty of an old friend, and permit me to prescribe for you as well as for your husband; and since you will probably have

have still a great deal of nursing, you had better not impair your strength too early, but endeavour by timely rest to recruit your frame, which will sink under perpetual watching." And then having directed some medicines of a composing nature for Lord George, he took his leave; and his patient soon after falling into a slumber, occasioned by the medicines, Lady Susan complied with the earnest entreaties of Melbourne, and promised to endeavour to sleep, but begged first that he would give her a few minutes of private conversation.

CHAP. X.

A RECOVERY.

WITH a heavy heart, and most agitating apprehensions, Melbourne accompanied Lady Susan to her dressing-room, and for some moments they were both unable to enter on the distressing subject. At length she said, "Any further concealment of the horrible truth Lord George disclosed in his delirium, must now, you must be convinced, be wholly impossible, and all denial or subterfuge equally vain and impracticable; but I am not going, Mr. Melbourne, to ask you any further particulars of a circumstance which, I doubt not, you are perfectly well informed of;

of; I have knowledge enough—too much for my peace. Tell me only, I conjure you, how it will be best to proceed.”

Melbourne took her hand, and gazing earnestly in her face, was preparing to make some slight palliative account of the state of Lord George’s mind; but she interrupted him by saying, “Do not give yourself this needless trouble—it is enough for me to know that I am not the object of Lord George’s affection; that there is a being preferred to me; but will it be better, for the sake of my Lord’s own peace, to conceal from him for ever the cruel discovery he has made? or, when he recovers his usual health, can any mode be adopted of restoring to him that liberty he would wish to use so differently.”

“I trust, dear Lady Susan,” said Melbourne, “that my friend’s recovery from this illness, will — that — in short, that he will be wholly sensible of your merits,—and then — perhaps —.”

“Tell

“ Tell me only, Mr. Melbourne, which of those two modes I had best pursue:— whether to endeavour to remove from him an object whom he cannot love, or to bury in eternal silence the shaft that rankles in my heart? I consult you in preference to my parents, because I would wish the fatal discovery to spread no further; and if we part, Oh Heavens! if I abandon the husband I adore! let the separation be imputed to my caprice, not to any fault of his.—Fault it is not, for, alas! is not love involuntary?”

Tears fell from her eyes as she spoke, (the first she had shed since the cruel moment that robbed her of peace) and Melbourne, really struck with admiration at the nobleness and affection of her heart, expressed what he felt in the most unequivocal terms, adding, “ Lord George cannot but be sensible, on his recovery, of his peculiar happiness in possessing such a wife, and I trust will never give you a moment’s reason to recal the fatal expressions uttered in his delirium. Indeed I am persuaded his heart will be wholly

wholly your's, but at all events it will surely be better to conceal the truth at present, and hereafter to be guided by events."

"And may I, Mr. Melbourne," asked Lady Susan, "may I depend on receiving from you hereafter candid and ingenuous advice? may I look up to you as to a friend who will counsel me for the best? you see the motive which induces me to trust wholly to you, and to overlook those circumstances which would perhaps make it more prudent not to rely on the friendship of so young a man."

"Indeed, Lady Susan," answered Melbourne, with an air of respect, "you honour me by the confidence you repose in me, and you may be assured I will never, in any point, abuse it. I will, on my friend's recovery, be perfectly ingenuous with you, and you may depend on receiving the most candid and the best advice I am capable of giving; and believe me, I agree with you, and admire the sentiment that this untoward discovery should be known only to ourselves."

Lady

Lady Susan thanked him for his friendship, and besought him to return to the chamber of the sick man; in his way to which, he met the messenger from G—— Castle, who had waited there some hours for the return of the Duke and Dutchess, who had been absent on a distant excursion, but from whom they had just received intelligence that they should not be home till the following day. The account of Lord George's illness was accordingly dispatched after them, and the messenger returned to account for the delay. Melbourne immediately sent another express to quiet their parental apprehensions, and to assure them that the danger was over; and then returning to the chamber of Lord George, found him still in a quiet slumber, from which his valet said he had not at all varied. This was, as Dr. Lewson had told him, the most favourable symptom they could expect; and Melbourne, keeping the valet de chambre still in the room, endeavoured to take a little sleep himself in the arm-chair by the side of the bed; but reflections on the cruel events of the morning—on the
horrible

horrible state of Lady Susan's mind, and the conflict of passions which had undoubtedly occasioned Lord George's fever, prevented sleep from visiting his eye-lids. He admired the character of Lady Susan, as these terrible circumstances exhibited it more fully to his view, and thought her scarcely inferior to Julia Dalrymple. He hoped much from her patient and affectionate attendance on her husband, yet the future was dark and dismal: what could ever restore peace and confidence to her mind? at best she would only believe herself possessed of Lord George's friendship, and most probably would think every expression of kindness only an affectation of a sentiment he did not feel; for she would have no idea of his feeling even kindness for her, as she had been the innocent means of depriving him of the woman he loved. Melbourne, whose heart was tender and feeling as a woman's, entered into all these sentiments, and in the present distresses of his friends, forgot for the moment his own hopeless love.

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The Duke and Dutchess of G—— arrived the next morning, and being assured by Dr. Lewson that Lord George was in no danger, but that his confinement would probably be a long one, they made but a short stay, and left their son to the unceasing cares of his wife and his friend. Now the first violence of danger was over, many days elapsed without any material amendment in Lord George, and even when the doctor pronounced him considerably better, there was such a degree of languor and heaviness still hung about him, that Lady Susan hardly thought him less ill than he had been. She was too well convinced, however, that the whole had been occasioned by uneasiness of mind; and feeling herself to be the cause of that uneasiness, it was not without the severest exertions that she preserved that heroical calmness which astonished Melbourne, who, not witnessing her internal conflicts, sometimes felt inclined to ascribe to apathy a tranquillity he himself found it so difficult to assume. By the bed-side of her husband

Lady Susan was ever affectionate, attentive, and encouraging; she waited upon him with unwearied diligence, studied his ease and comfort in the most trivial circumstances; and because she fancied him still too weak to talk, she would not suffer him to utter, as frequently as he now seemed inclined to do, expressions of gratitude and affection towards her. She felt them fallacious, and still hesitated what course to pursue when her husband should be recovered;—of private conferences with Melbourne she sought no more, nor, except in the first short interview, had they ever exchanged their sentiments on the fatal subject. Yet, in spite of her assumed tranquillity when in her husband's sight, Melbourne, who watched her with the tenderest care and attention, sometimes perceived, as she sat concealed by the curtains, a look of agony impress itself on her lovely features; he was certain that her health was much impaired, for her colour was fled, and her countenance was wholly changed, and when he remarked these unequivocal tokens of suffering,

fering, his heart bled for the innocent victim of love and misfortune!

Lord George had now been confined five weeks, when he began rapidly to mend. Lady Susan and Melbourne saw with pleasure an amendment of which they had almost despaired, and perceived, with a sensation beyond pleasure, that the weight on his spirits seemed much removed. Of this, however, the wife felt less assured than the friend, who now himself sought an opportunity of speaking to her, with a view to re-assure her mind, but he had not yet found one; when being one day in Lord George's chamber, while Lady Susan was absent, Lord George expressed infinite apprehensions lest the health of his wife should suffer by her attendance on him. "Indeed, Melbourne," said he, "she is an angel, and I begin to feel the truth of your assertions—that her merits would rise full upon me!" How amiable, how affectionate has she been! Upon my soul, my friend, when I am wholly recovered, I feel that she will possess my entire affections!

I know not whether my illness has caused a revolution in my love—I have heard of such things; but certain it is that a once beloved image is fading fast away from my heart, and my Susan's enchanting graces, and engaging tenderness are gaining full possession of it. How deeply has she felt my illness!"

"And yet you know not half her sufferings, my friend," replied Melbourne; "from you she ever concealed them, but her pallid countenance bears testimony to the agonies of her heart. You owe her, my Lord, the fullest reparation possible for the concealed injury you have done her; let all your words and looks express the fondest affection, and be, indeed, a passionate bridegroom."

"I shall not now want your admonitions on that head, my friend," answered Lord George

"I feel that as I recover strength, I shall become, indeed, her passionate admirer!"

Melbourne, who feared the consequence of too much agitation to his friend, forbore now, what he fully intended at some future opportunity, informing him of part of the horrible confession

confession he had made in his delirium, and in the course of the day, leaving Lord George to a slight repose, he found Lady Susan alone in her dressing-room.

“ Mr. Melbourne,” said she, “ I have been wishing for some days to speak to you, since I am more irresolute than ever; and from you I am promised, you know, the most ingenuous advice.”

“ And without the least hesitation I will give it you, my dear Lady Susan,” said he; “ banish all doubts, and ———.”

“ Nay, but hear me first,” interrupted she; “ in my many hours of mournful reflection, Mr. Melbourne, my firm conclusion has always been that it would be most adviseable for me to withdraw myself from my husband. There are, doubtless, many objections to this scheme:—the injury it would do my character, the anger of my parents, and every inconvenience that affected only myself, I would brave with calmness; but it will not restore to him the liberty he pants for; and the length of his illness has

given me another forcible cause for irresolution at least."

"You have no cause for irresolution at all," said Melbourne, at length interrupting her, which she had several times prevented his doing. "I am convinced the remainder of your lives will be unembittered by any recollection of the past; indeed, the remembrance of this unhappiness will serve to enhance the value of your future felicity. I am fully persuaded that your husband adores you; that a fatal image, which has caused you so much disquiet, is faded for ever from his bosom, and that you reign mistress there!"

Lady Susan looked at him with an eye of mingled hope and distrust;—he repeated his assurances. She clasped her hands together, and throwing up her eyes to Heaven, uttered a short exclamation, and burst into tears;—they were salutary tears, and fell copiously. She had hardly wept at all, she said, since the fatal discovery; her distraction had been too great to allow her that relief. A message

now

now arrived from Lord George, desiring to speak with Melbourne, who, beseeching Lady Susan to recompose her spirits, instantly repaired to the sick man's chamber, who was sitting up in his bed; and ordering his valet to quit the room, took hold of Melbourne's hand, and with an earnest look and manner, said, "Melbourne, by all the friendship you have ever borne me—by all on earth you hold most dear and sacred, I conjure you be sincere with me!—did I utter any thing in my delirium to betray my secret?"

Melbourne trembled for the consequences of being sincere at this moment, witnessing, as he did, the extraordinary agitation of his friend; he therefore endeavoured to evade the question, by saying, "How, my dear Lord George, could such a fancy come into your head?"

"No matter how," replied the sick man, "it is there; and believe me, Melbourne, if you forbear to speak from tenderness to me, equivocation will be far more fatal; tell me

the truth, and I shall know how to proceed, but doubt will distract me; and I am so persuaded that something of the kind has happened, that if you deny it, I shall not believe you."

Melbourne saw that his friend was in earnest, yet still felt unable to proceed. Lord George pressed the hand he still held, and added, "Think what a dagger I have plunged in the bosom of a wife whom I love! And will you not help me to extract it? Are you no longer my friend?"

"How truly, Heaven only knows," answered Melbourne, "and I will own, that in the beginning of your illness, you did rave about Julia."

"It is, however, some relief to know the truth, horrible as it is," said Lord George; "and how has Lady Susan bore it?"

"Most heroically!" replied Melbourne, "yet most feelingly!"

"And till this last half hour," resumed Lord George, "it never occurred to me; and now, with a thousand circumstances that
flashed

flashed conviction on my mind, I felt certain it had happened."

"And pray tell me," said Melbourne, "how it now happened to occur to you."

"I was meditating," said Lord George, "on the cause and circumstances of my illness, and asked my valet if I had ever been delirious;—he told me I was at the beginning, but that he was not by, and added that his Lady was extremely terrified. This gave me the first alarm, and then recollecting your late words, equivocal as they were, that I knew not half her sufferings, they served to confirm the half-formed idea;—but let me delay no longer; send for my dear Susan hither; let me, by the fullest confession, repair the mischief I have done!"

"Do not, my friend," said Melbourne, tenderly, "exert yourself too much; so much agitation will overpower you; you are not yet strong."

"That which relieves the mind, Melbourne," replied Lord George, "will, in an illness originating from the mind, restore

strength to the body. You need not fear, my friend, but send for Lady Susan."

Lady Susan instantly obeyed the summons, though her swollen eyes bore testimony of her employment.

Lord George tenderly took her hand, and made her sit on the side of the bed. Melbourne would have quitted the room, but his friend desired him to stay; and then, kissing the hand of his lovely wife, he pressed it to his heart, and shed a few tears. Lady Susan was surprised and alarmed; she looked at Melbourne, who wished to put an end to this dumb scene, and who therefore said, "Speak to him, Lady Susan; he is much better."

"Are you better, my Lord?" said she, tenderly.

"Much better," he replied, "but ——" He hesitated, and Melbourne, who found he could not open the business, said, "But he has an idea that something fell from him in his delirium which may ——"

Lady

Lady Susan gazed in astonishment, and Lord George drawing her still nearer to him, continued, "It was true then, my Susan, but it is true no longer! Can you accept this undivided heart? Can you believe that no sentiment exists in this bosom incompatible with the truest, the tenderest love for you? Oh Lady Susan! can you forgive me your past uneasiness, and for ever forget ——"

"And do you then love me!" said she, "Oh, exquisite happiness! do not deceive me now, my Lord."

"Now, nor ever!" resumed he. "Yes, my dearest Susan, my heart is, and ever will be wholly your's! I will not deny that it has been another's; that even when I married you, it was devoted to that other—to Julia Dalrymple! but from the fulness of my confession you may judge of the truth of my declaration, that my affections are now as wholly and as warmly your's as if they had never known another mistress;—can you believe me?"

"Can I, dare I disbelieve you?" said she; "Oh! no, never will I doubt for a moment,

moment, never for a moment remember, except to double my consciousness of bliss, that I was ever unhappy !”

“ My angel wife,” said Lord George, “ can my whole life, spent in fond endeavours to make you happy, atone for the misery I have made you suffer ?”

“ This moment, my beloved Lord,” replied she, in which I read your affection in your eyes, this moment, which assures me of your love, far overpays all I have felt.”

Lord George opened his arms to clasp his lovely wife, who wept upon his bosom, and returned his fondness with equal warmth. Melbourne shed tears of the sublimest joy on witnessing this scene, and a thousand times blessed the fortunate discovery which he should long have wanted courage to make, and which had so strangely taken possession of Lord George’s apprehension.

From this period, in which his heart was perfectly at rest, Lord George rapidly regained his former health; the roses too resumed their favourite station on the lovely
check

cheek of Lady Susan, her gaiety returned, and in a very short period all traces of indisposition were vanished like a sad vision of the night, whose gloomy impression is effaced by the cheering influence of the sun.

CHAP. X.

CONTAINING A GREAT DEAL OF MATTER.

IN order entirely to restore strength to Lord George, it was judged proper for him to spend some weeks at the sea-side; and Melbourne, who was become dearer than ever to his friend, and almost as much beloved by Lady Susan as by her husband, was not suffered to think of leaving them. Indeed his future plans were still so undecided,

cided, that an interval of a few weeks would make no great difference to him. The circumstances that had lately occurred rendered him more than ever averse to hint to Lord George the difficulties he laboured under, and he almost felt himself blameable, possessed as he was of youth, health, and strength, to indulge so idle an idea as that of being maintained, during the period of his studies, by the friendship of any man. He fancied it would be more truly fulfilling his duty, were he to embark in some more active line of life, which would enable him not only to maintain himself, but also to remit to Mr. Searle some pecuniary assistance, which it would perhaps never be in his power to do, even were he, by the assistance of Lord George, to keep his terms at Cambridge, and to enter into holy orders. Another motive had some weight in leading him to look to a more active situation. He felt, that in quietness and solitude, the idea of Julia Dalrymple perpetually recurred to his imagination, and as he felt himself placed
at

at an immeasurable distance from the smallest glimmering of hope, he thought it wrong to indulge himself in dwelling on a recollection which only served to fix his hopeless passion more deeply in his heart. Lord George Montague in the mean while, though he appeared to have forgotten the precarious situation of his friend in the pleasure he took in his company, was not inattentive to his interests. Like many other young men of fashion, he had imbibed some degree of prejudice against the profession Melbourne had selected; he thought it a pity that so fine, so promising a youth should be doomed for life to a black coat; and yet having often tried to change the current of his friend's inclinations, and tried in vain, he was now resolved to wait some time in hopes of some other situation presenting itself, which might effect more than his arguments had hitherto done. In the few conversations they held together on the subject, Lady Susan rather took Melbourne's side of the question; but she was not of a disposition to maintain an opinion

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contrary

contrary to her husband's, and she soon ceased to oppose his prejudices when he spoke of them to her.

To a small village on the sea coast, not far from a fashionable bathing place, Melbourne then accompanied his friends. They preferred the retired place to the gay resort of company, for they went in search of health, and they were sure to find more pleasure in each other's society, than in an indiscriminate mixture, such as usually assemble at watering places. In order, however, to obviate the loneliness of the place to Lady Susan, Lord George prevailed on a cousin of his to join the party. Mrs. Greville was already known to Lady Susan, and was several years her senior, but she was very lively, sensible, and good-humoured; and having lost her husband, who left her a very good fortune, and no children, she had no restraint on her inclinations, and being fond of variety, and making herself very agreeable to all people, she was a very desirable acquisition to all parties. She laughed at her cousins for preferring

ferring the retired village to the public place, yet though she laughed, her manner was such as to persuade them she approved of their choice; and when, after a very pleasant journey, they took possession of a neat little white house, under an immense cliff, looking immediately over a very beautiful sand on the smooth bosom of the ocean, she professed herself enchanted with the spot, and said all that the rest of the party felt about it.

Mrs. Greville and Lord George had always been very fond of each other, and she was so civil and so kind to Lady Susan, that she really liked her very much, so that perhaps Melbourne was the only one who found her rather an incumbrance. He was a little afraid of her; and Mrs. Greville, when she perceived it, took a good deal of pleasure in keeping up that awe which he felt. She saw that her quickness and raillery rather incommoded him, and she was not at all disposed to be merciful, so that what was at first only shyness in Melbourne towards her, was quickly advancing to dislike, and per-
haps

haps would have become a rooted disgust, but that he saw she was rather a favourite with Lord George, and therefore persuaded himself that she must have merits which he had not yet discovered. He thought himself, however, very unfortunate that it so often fell to his lot to be her companion, and wished that Lord George would take his lively cousin a little more to himself; he thought there was something in her that made him more stupid than common; he could find nothing to say to her; and one day as they were sitting after dinner, after one of those brilliant morning airings, Mrs. Greville, in her arch way, began telling Lady Susan how very much Melbourne improved upon acquaintance.—“When I first came down with you, my dear,” said she, “I thought him one of the most stupid young men I had ever seen; but, upon my honour, he grows remarkably agreeable, and this morning, with the least encouragement, he would have made downright love to me.”

Lady

Lady Susan had no turn for raillery, and only said, "Indeed!" and Lord George, turning to Melbourne, said, "There, Harry, that's a fair challenge! from this time you are bound in honour to make up to the widow, and, trust me, you won't want encouragement;—what say you? I think you could not do better—my cousin's a charming woman, and has fifteen hundred a year jointure."

"Upon my word," replied Melbourne, "it must be very extraordinary encouragement indeed that would induce me to offend Mrs. Greville with the least mention of love."

"Oh! offence is totally out of the question," replied Lord George; "I believe you are in more danger of offending by being silent on the subject."

Mrs. Greville gave Lord George a tap with her fan, and said, "You are intolerably saucy."

"I'll be judged by any body," replied Lord George, "if I have not good grounds for what I say."

"By

"By no means," said she, "I was speaking of Mr. Melbourne's improvement."

"Yes, yes," interrupted Lord George, "a young man's improvement cannot be trusted to a better person."

"To be sure," added she, looking ironically at Melbourne, "he shines most in a tête-à-tête! he does not shew his vivacity in so much company!"

"My dear Madam," said Melbourne, "I never pretend to meddle with the same weapons a lady has chosen!"

"Indeed," said she, "it is a very great mark of prudence,—haughty men cannot bear to give up any thing to ——"

"You are mistaken, cousin," said Lord George, "Melbourne entirely gives up to you."

"Poor creature! I believe it," said she, "but it is because he cannot help it."

Lord George whispered to Melbourne, "Upon my soul she's angry that you don't make

make love to her—she is absolutely in love with you.”

Melbourne smiled, and returned aloud, “ ’Tis impossible!”

“ By no means,” replied Lord George, “ try it, I entreat you.”

“ I mean,” said Melbourne, “ ’tis impossible that I should make the trial,—I believe nothing impossible to Mrs. Greville!”

Lord George laughed very heartily, and Mrs. Greville insisted on knowing what he had whispered to Melbourne, exclaiming against underhand assistance, as unfair and ungentlemanly. Lord George refused to tell her, and applying to Melbourne, she said, “ I will know, Sir, what it is you do not think impossible to me.”

“ Why, Madam,” replied Melbourne, gaily, “ when I consider my own attractions, I trust you need not blush if I do tell you that Lord George insists upon it you are in love with me; I own it is mortifying to meet with so cold a return, but it is “ because I cannot help it.”

“ Very

"Very fair," said Lord George, "I hope, cousin, you are answered, and out of your own mouth!"

Mrs. Greville really coloured so much as to give some suspicion that the charge was not wholly without foundation; but endeavouring to resume her nonchalance, said, "I told you he had something in him; only the pretty creature was bashful, and would not talk."

"You had better not provoke him any further," said Lord George, "or he may chance to call up more roses on those lovely cheeks."

Lady Susan, who thought the laugh had continued long enough, and who plainly saw that Melbourne was not charmed with Mrs. Greville, proposed strolling on the sands; and taking Mrs. Greville's arm, left Lord George and Melbourne to their own cogitations.

Lord George seriously advised his friend to think of the lively widow. — "She certainly likes you, Harry," said he, "and is undoubtedly

undoubtedly a very desirable match; she is good-hearted at bottom with all her rattle; and fifteen hundred a year is no mean consideration."

"Indeed, my Lord," replied Melbourne, "I think it a very mean consideration, and alone would deter me from ever wasting a thought about Mrs. Greville; but, however, I rather believe she has taken a dislike to me."

"You do not know woman," said Lord George. "No, no, my saucy cousin endeavours to speak the real truth in such a manner as to avoid suspicion; but you may depend upon it she is a little in love."

"I should be very base, then," replied Melbourne, "were I to take advantage of it, and marry her merely for her fortune; for love on my side would be wholly out of the question. I think you would not advise me to be the man that had married the rich widow."

"I would advise you nothing," replied Lord George, affectionately, "but what should

should be really for your happiness, and if you could not be happy with my cousin, why there is no more to be said."

The next day Lord George drove out both the ladies, and Melbourne felt a great relief in being without Mrs. Greville. He strolled along the sands, lost in deep thought; he was idling away moments that could not be recalled—moments in which he possessed that health and strength which ought to lead him to greater activity. He had formed no plan, and he felt that in his situation such a desultory life was criminal. In what light must he appear to every one who knew any thing about him—content to live a quiet dependant on Lord George Montague's bounty, wholly useless in the world, and making no exertion to change his situation; and yet in what way could he exert himself? whom could he consult but Mr. Searle and Lord George? and where could he meet with two less fit advisers?—Lord George nursed in the lap of plenty and indolence, knew nothing of the various modes of subsistence

istence in the world, and Mr. Searle, buried in retirement and study, was still less qualified to direct him to more useful pursuits. Yet this could not always last; he had determined it should last only till they had quitted the village where they now were. The time approached, and he had still formed no more decided plan; he resolved, therefore, the very next day to engage his friend to ride or walk with him, and then he thought they would try to settle a plan together. He had wandered on without thinking whither, and looking up, found himself approaching the town; he was not yet, however, arrived at its more crowded haunts, and was first going to turn about, when he saw a female figure sitting under a corner of the cliff, in a very retired spot; this curiosity prompted him to continue his walk a little further, and as he advanced, he thought she seemed weeping. Good manners now impelled him to return; but still he advanced, certain of being unknown, when, just as he was within a few yards of her, she removed the handkerchief

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from her eyes on hearing footsteps so near, and in a tremulous voice pronounced the name of Melbourne!

That voice struck on his heart most forcibly; he was in a moment at her side, exclaiming, "Julia!" it was indeed Julia!

Adieu all sad ruminations on futurity! the wonderful, the delightful *present* took up his whole heart.

"And how, dear Julia, came you here?"

"I am at —, with Mr. and Mrs. Trebison; we have been there three weeks, and you, Melbourne —"

"Good God! I have been in this neighbourhood a fortnight with Lord George and Lady Susan Montague, and never to have been thus fortunate before!"

"I wander but little from home," replied she; "it is quite a chance that I am out so far to-day."

A blush crossed the cheek, and a sigh heaved the bosom of Julia as she spoke; but in a moment she became again pale, and Melbourne perceived, what her emotion on the

the first sight of him had concealed, that she was much paler than when he last saw her, and that she looked ill.

"Dear Julia, you are not well!" said he, in a tone of tender enquiry."

"Pardon me, Mr. Melbourne," she replied, "we are here only in search of pleasure!"

"You do not appear to have found it here," cried he, "Oh! Miss Dalrymple, do not think me impertinent, but—your countenance—your tears!"

"The circumstances in which you left me at York, Mr. Melbourne, might well account for the tears I was imprudently indulging."

"Julia! dear and earliest friend of my youth," said Melbourne, with warmth, "I know your native dignity too well to suppose that those tears were only called forth by events so long past."

Julia blushed, and casting her speaking eyes for a moment at Melbourne, withdrew them again, and again tears suffused them. Mel-

bourne took her hand, pressed it to his lips, and in a half whisper, said, "Alas! you are not happy!"

"You may remember," said she, endeavouring to compose herself, "that when I told you at York of the mode of life I was about to adopt, I had not formed any very sanguine hopes of happiness. I am now living with Mr. and Mrs. Trebison; my cousin, you know of old, never was very affectionate, and Mr. Trebison ——"

She hesitated; and Melbourne gazing in her face, said, "Is a wretch! a libertine!"

Julia could no longer repress her tears; they flowed very fast, and Melbourne was silent. At length Julia once more endeavoured to speak:—"Yes, Melbourne," said she, "Trebison is a wretch! You have surprised me in a moment when I had too completely lost my usual composure, not to betray all my feelings to the eye of friendship; but do not think I am always thus dejected! I was now retired hither from a home where I can——"

I cannot be retired to ponder on what I must do; for with the Trebisons I cannot remain!"

"Good God!" exclaimed Melbourne, "is his conduct so base? Let me conduct you instantly to Lady Susan Montague; I am sure —"

Julia smiled faintly at the impetuosity of Melbourne.

"No," said she, "Melbourne, I do not mean to elope suddenly, and raise a hue and cry after me; I do not certainly intend to continue to live with the Trebisons; indeed, as I am now situated, it would be impossible."

Again her tears flowed faster, and Melbourne, gently pressing the hand he still held, said, "Would to God I knew, or dared to enquire into all the particulars of a situation that afflicts my very soul! not, indeed, that were I fully instructed, I should be an adequate adviser."

"Indeed," replied Julia, "the voice of friendship is so new and so soothing to my soul, that I can scarcely forbear explaining

to you all my difficulties; and I think you would counsel me impartially."

Melbourne replied only by pressing to his heart the fair hand he still possessed, and by drawing gently nearer to Julia.

"Oh Melbourne!" said she, "what a loss we both had in my uncle Macartney! surely our sorrows are similar! had he lived I should not now have wanted a friendly asylum to shelter me from insult and jealousy.—How different from himself are his children!

"Different indeed!" replied Melbourne, "Matilda never was amiable; but, good Heaven! can no plan be imagined to release you from ——"

"There are many little circumstances, Melbourne," said Julia, "which a young woman of delicacy must attend to. I would not wish to raise a moment's wonder in any one, or that any human being should be led to say, why did Miss Dalrymple leave Mrs. Trebison? And then the difficulty of finding a proper situation. Indeed, indeed, Melbourne, there are difficulties which you cannot imagine, and I cannot explain."

"I can

“ I can conceive,” replied Melbourne, “ that there are numberless little difficulties to surmount ; but surely there are some circumstances which would lead your native delicacy to overlook petty embarrassments—Insult! jealousy!”——

“ Were I disposed to be proud or cap-
tious,” replied Julia, “ I would say with
Calista,

“ I am myself the guardian of my honour.”

But I thank you for your solicitude, and I
own that what you say is not unfounded.”

“ Dearest Julia,” said Melbourne, “ who
has dared to insult you? Who has dared to
be jealous?”

“ The conduct of such a man as Tre-
bison,” replied Julia, “ is a perpetual in-
sult to a woman of feeling.”

“ Unmanly rascal! exclaimed Melbourne,
“ does he dare to wound your ears?”

“ Moderate your warmth,” said Julia,
“ recollect we are in too public a place.
Indeed, Melbourne, I am much to blame; I
ought to have checked; to have concealed

my sorrows, but have I not ever looked on you as my friend—my brother?”

A sudden blush shot across the pale cheek of Julia as she ended, which deepened, even painfully, as Melbourne said, “Your friend! your brother! dearest, dearest Julia!”

Their eyes met for a moment, but her's sunk beneath the ardent expression of Melbourne's. He grasped more closely, with both his, the trembling hand he still retained; both were silent—but, what a moment! Julia was the first to recollect herself, and willing to let those emotions pass unobserved, said, with as much composure as she could assume, “I fear it is very late; my stay will be wondered at. Farewell, my friend!” said she, as she rose from the rock.

“Stay, Julia, yet a few moments,” cried Melbourne, “Good God, to what a home are you impatient to return!”

“It is, however, right I should return,” said Julia; “do not, Melbourne, wish to detain me.”

“Alas!”

“ Alas!” said Melbourne, “ chance has blessed me with this sight of you; and now when shall I see you again? you will ——”

“ As we have —— I know not;—let me go, Melbourne,” said she, endeavouring to withdraw her hand.

At that moment on the sands Trebison appeared; Julia's colour varied from pale to red, and from red to pale as he approached. He cast a contemptuous look at Melbourne, and said, ironically, “ This then is the reason, Julia, that you disregard your friends, and neglect their offers for your advantage; this is the reason kindness is misconstrued, and civility despised, your home abandoned, and your delicacy set at nought. Mr. Melbourne is, no doubt, a fitter companion than Matilda for your walks, and a more proper friend for a lady.”

“ You know me then,” said Melbourne, haughtily, “ and yet you dare ——”

“ Know you,” said Trebison, “ what should have happened to me that I should not know you? You are the parish boy that Macartney's father chose to support at Eton, and

and for whom Miss Dalrymple forsakes her home, and abandons her friends."

"Did not the presence of Miss Dalrymple restrain me," said Melbourne.

"Oh! Sir, you may save your words," replied Trebison; "I fight with no beggars! the chances are too unequal."

"Then give me leave to tell you," said Melbourne, "that you are a rascal and a coward! you dare to insult a lady, and refuse to answer for it."

Melbourne raised his arm, and seizing Trebison's collar, said, "Will you behave as becomes a man, or shall I ——"

"Gentlemen! Mr. Trebison, Mr. Melbourne," cried Julia, "for God's sake!"—

"Let go your hold, Sir," said Trebison.

"Will you, then!" cried Melbourne.

"For Heaven's sake," Mr. Melbourne," said Julia, almost fainting, "for Heaven's sake; desist; why is all this?"

Melbourne saw the extreme terror painted on Julia's face, and said coolly to Trebison, "You may thank this lady, Sir, that I do
not

not kick you as you deserve. Go, and enjoy your ease and safety if you can!"

He then let go Trebison's coat, who, seizing Julia's hand, drew her arm under his, and said, "I shall not leave you now, you little runaway, till I see you safe housed." And turning his back on Melbourne, walked away very fast with his trembling prize.

Melbourne, however, would not leave her alone in the care of the enraged Trebison, who would undoubtedly vent all the spleen he felt on her innocent head, and therefore, with equal speed, walked the same way, and was immediately on the other side of Julia.

"There is no occasion, Sir," said Trebison, sarcastically, "for your further attendance; I shall see Miss Dalrymple safe home."

"Nor have you," replied Melbourne, firmly, "any right to forbid my attendance. — I shall have the honour of walking with her also."

"This is very singular behaviour, Mr. Melbourne," said Trebison, "and very unbecoming in you."

"It is behaviour," replied Melbourne, "that I shall know very well how to answer for."

"Fine bravadoes!" said Trebison, "and language not very proper before a lady!"

"I am ashamed neither of my language nor my conduct," answered Melbourne; "it were to be wished every one could say as much!"

"What do you mean by that?" cried Trebison.

"I mean," replied Melbourne, "that neither your language, nor your conduct, are those of a gentleman."

"D—n me," said Trebison, "do you pretend to talk of a gentleman's conduct to a gentleman?"

"No, not to a gentleman," said Melbourne, "to a blackguard and a coward!"

"Pray, gentlemen! pray, Mr. Melbourne!" said the supplicating voice of Julia.

"I

"I shall teach you a little better manners one of these days," said Trebison; "the lady's presence indeed now——"

"If that's all," said Melbourne, "you will be cautious how you venture out without a lady!"

"I see your aim," said Trebison, "but I will disappoint it;—you shall not draw me into a quarrel."

"Trebison," said Melbourne, "we have known each other some years, and you know that I do not want courage, though it never was my character to begin a quarrel. In this instance you are the aggressor, and if you do not appoint some time in which to give me honourable satisfaction, I will haunt you like your shadow, I will proclaim you a coward, and cane you or kick you whenever I meet you."

"Very pretty boasting, truly," replied Trebison, "and no doubt but that, intimidated by your threats, I shall put the chance of my life into the hands of a black guard and a beggar!"

"You will not then fight?"

"Not with you."

"For Heaven's sake, gentlemen," said Julia, "desist from this conduct! for pity, do not seek to deprive each other of life for such a trifle!"

"A trifle!" repeated Melbourne, fiercely.

"Mr. Melbourne," said Julia, "why this undue warmth? recollect yourself, I entreat you."

The tone of Julia's voice hushed in a moment the tumult in Melbourne's bosom; he bowed respectfully to her, and said, "I acknowledge I am wrong to give way to so much anger; pardon me, Miss Dalrymple, I will restrain myself."

Trebison could not forbear uttering some expressions of contempt, which had almost rekindled all Melbourne's rage, but a look from Julia kept him silent till they reached the house. Julia, pale and trembling, entered hastily, nor could she wish her champion good morning; he touched his hat to her,

her, and said firmly to Trebison, as he passed him, "We shall find a time, Sir."

Thrown out of his equanimity by the events of the morning, Melbourne was not sufficiently composed to return home, and encounter the raillery of Mrs. Greville. He wandered down to the sea-shore, and having rambled for some time, had at length determined to measure back his way to his own quiet abode, and ponder as he went how he had best proceed with respect to Trebison; when, as he entered the parade, which he was obliged to pass in his way home, at the other end he saw the object of his reveries, arm in arm with three or four men of his own age, talking and laughing with no small vociferation. This sight renewed all Melbourne's resentment in a moment, and when they came pretty near him, they extended their line so as to render it impossible for him to pass. Had there been any other street, down which he could have gone to have avoided them, it is more than probable that Melbourne would have disdained to take advantage

advantage of it; but there was none, and he was obliged to face the enemy thus drawn up in battle array, who, the moment he approached them, and offered to pass, burst out by one consent into a horse laugh. Melbourne was by no means disposed to pass over conduct so evidently meant to affront him; but knowing that Trebison must be the leader, he advanced immediately opposite to him, and said, "If you are disposed to settle our differences, Sir, I am at your service."

"What does he say?" cried one of the gang. "D—n him," said another, "who is the fellow?" "Aye," said a third, "who is he, Trebison? he seems to make up to you!"

"Poor dog!" said Trebison, "he's very poor and very proud; almost sick of depending on my Lord George Montague; I dare say, Clemmitt, if you'd give him a place in your office, he'd be very grateful, and very humble."

"What is your office, Clemmitt, asked he who had spoken first.

"The

"The London Assurance," said Clemmitt.

"Arrah, my honey!" said an Irishman, who had hitherto been silent, "he seems devilishly well qualified for that, and d—n me if I don't think London assurance bates Irish impudence all to nothing at all at all."

They all laughed with great vehemence at this evidently preconcerted joke; and as soon as he could be heard, Melbourne said,

"You are very welcome to amuse yourselves, gentlemen; my business is with none of you. Mr. Trebison would gladly get off with a laugh, but I shall venture to tell him, guarded as he now is, that he is both a rascal and a coward!"

"A pretty strong expression that," said Clemmitt.

"And if," continued Melbourne, "he wishes to make me retract any part of the assertion, he will now appoint a time and place to meet me, either with sword or pistol; if he does not, I shall take the liberty of kicking or caning him."

"Is

"Is it fighting you've a mind for?" said the Irishman; "and won't Trebison fight you? well, well then I will."

"I have no quarrel with you, Sir," said Melbourne, "nor do I wish it."

"And pray now, my dear," said the Irishman, "what signifies the quarrel when you are after cutting one another's throats; for my part, my maxim is to fight first, and settle why afterwards."

"That is not my mode, Sir," replied Melbourne; "I have no wish to fight at all, but I cannot put up with Mr. Trebison's conduct, nor can any man of honour approve it; yet, if he will make an apology, I will accept it, for I am not ambitious of cutting his throat."

"Here, Trebison," roared out Clemmitt, "Lord George Montague's toad-eater will do you the favour to accept your apology;—come, my boy, now for it."

"Why, where is Trebison?" said the Irishman, "What, is he stole away? D—n me if I don't think you are in the right, young

young man. He must be a coward;—come, come, write him a challenge, and I'll carry it for you. What, did nobody see him make off?"

Melbourne said in a low voice, "No matter, I shall find a time. Good morning to you, gentlemen." And with these words he passed by them, leaving the Irishman strongly inclined to be his friend, and the rest, impressed at least with more respect for him than when he first approached them.

"Melbourne returned home with rather a hurried pace, but the rest of the party were not yet arrived. He wrote immediately a short note to Trebison, appointing the next morning but one to meet him, and mentioning a very retired spot not far from the town where Trebison resided. He dispatched a messenger with this billet instantly, and endeavoured to compose himself, for he was very much agitated by all the events of the morning. It wanted still some time to dinner, and he determined to write to Mr. Scarle, but when he sat down, no mode occurred in
which

which he could confess to that excellent minister of peace, that he was engaged in a quarrel which was to be terminated by bloodshed. This circumstance gave him some idea that he was morally wrong, however justified by the law of honour; a law which he felt ought to have no weight where actual good or ill were in debate. He walked up and down the apartment in much agitation, and recollecting, with increased emotion, that he was just going to set his life at stake when it was rendered more valuable to him than ever. The look, the voice of Julia, had spoken conviction to his soul! he felt that he was dear to her, and he was going to hazard everything.

And was it not in her cause he fought? And even though Julia did entertain a partiality for him, was it consistent with her interest to indulge it? Was he not certain that he should lead her to ruin, were he to persuade her to unite her fortunes to his? Had he not, very lately, determined to banish her loved idea? and consequently, would it not be

be advisable for her to think no more of him? He might fall in this quarrel; Julia might weep for him, but she would be delivered from a lover who could never have the power of contributing to her happiness.

Thus falsely did Melbourne argue to reconcile himself to the step he was about to take. "Besides," added he, "I have now no choice; I am embarked, and cannot return." He wished, however, that he had appointed the very next day, that he might not have had so long an interval; not that he trembled at the thought of fighting, but unused as he was to the reproaches of his own heart, he wished to shorten the time in which he was condemned to hear them.

In the midst of these reveries he heard the approach of the phæton, and hastily retired to his own apartment, for he was not sufficiently at ease to encounter the piercing eye and keen raillery of Mrs. Greville. Lord George, however, soon came to him; and discovering the perturbation of his mind in his countenance, endeavoured to find out the cause;

cause; but Melbourne alledged that he should not now have time to explain the whole, and that it would only increase his emotions to enter on the subject without fully discussing it. "But in the evening, my friend," added he, "if you will give me an hour, I will explain all the cause of the disturbance your eye has so immediately discovered."

Lord George accepted the proposal, and Melbourne met the party at dinner with an affected composure which passed off pretty well, owing to Lord George's kindness in engaging the attention of Mrs. Greville; indeed a Colonel Fortescue, who sat down with them, took upon himself the care of Mrs. Greville, who yet seemed sorry to lose her young beau.

CHAP. XI.

A DEPARTURE.

MELBOURNE left the room as soon as possible after dinner; and in the passage met his messenger, who told him the gentleman was out, and would send an answer the next day; and in a very few minutes was joined by Lord George, who had left the ladies to the care of Colopel Fortescue, for he was anxious to hear the history of the morning. They rambled arm in arm to the sea-side without entering on the subject, till at length Lord George said, "And now, my friend, let me claim your promise; tell me, without reserve, what it is that has thus disturbed you?"

"I am

"I am engaged, my Lord," replied Melbourne, "in a business which I highly disapprove, and which you know me well enough to believe it was hardly possible to avoid. In short, the day after to-morrow I am to risk my own life, and that of a fellow-creature, on a trumpery quarrel."

"If I did not know you very well," said Lord George, "I should attribute your perturbation to fear; but tell me then with whom, and how arose this quarrel? I dare say you are justified in what you have undertaken."

"In the eye of the world I certainly am," replied Melbourne, "but a duel is so contrary to all my principles, to all my habits of thinking, to the rules of that profession I so long intended to embrace, and to every natural sense of rectitude, that I shrink from it like a coward, however the warmth of the moment, and the nature of the provocation hurried me into it."

"In the commerce of the world, my dear Melbourne," replied Lord George, "much
of

of the natural sense of rectitude must undoubtedly be sacrificed to the arbitrary laws of honour."

"Those tyrannical laws," replied Melbourne, "force many a man to the commission of actions for which his heart reproaches him at the time. Thus shall I expose my own life, and seek to take away that of another in obedience to these laws, while my conscience severely reproves me; and shall brave its censure, because I dare not brave the censure of the world."

"'Tis very true," said Lord George, "but ——"

"True courage," resumed Melbourne, "would most assuredly lead men to brave every stigma but that of their own hearts; for what is the applause or blame of the multitude, compared to the 'still small voice' of Conscience, the deity within?"

"My dear Melbourne," said Lord George, "think not so deeply, or at least put me in possession of the subject of your duel."

"Pardon me, my friend," replied Melbourne, "I was so lost in my painful reflections, that I had forgotten to inform you further; my quarrel is with Trebison, and its subject is his insolence to Miss Dalrymple and to myself."

"Trebison and Miss Dalrymple!" said Lord George, eagerly; "and where are they? and how did you meet with them?"

"By the merest chance imaginable," answered Melbourne;—"in my walk this morning I saw Miss Dalrymple, and our early acquaintance gave me a right to address her. She was in tears, and I found had been insulted by Trebison, who has married her cousin, Miss Macartney, with whom Julia has lived since the death of her aunt. While we were yet talking, Trebison approached, and behaved in a manner it was impossible not to resent. I would instantly have chastised him as he deserved, but the presence of Miss Dalrymple restrained me. Alone with him, however, I determined not to leave her, and therefore walked home
with

with them. Trebison went into the house, and I wandered to some little distance, and was again returning through the town, when I saw Trebison, and five of his associates, arm in arm, coming towards me. It was impossible to avoid them had I wished it, and I own my blood boiled within me; they evidently meant to affront me, and much opprobrious language was levelled at me,—the others, however, moved no anger in me, but the rascal Trebison quitted the party unobserved; and since I got home, I have sent him a challenge, but my messenger brings me word he is from home, and will send an answer to-morrow.”

“It is Trebison who was at Eton, is it not?” said Lord George. Melbourne said it was. “He is the rankest coward,” resumed Lord George, “that ever was born! He will find some means of evading the challenge, believe me; and then you will be at peace with yourself.”

" I shall not have been less in the wrong," returned Melbourne, " because Trebison proves himself a coward."

" You have not been wrong," replied Lord George; " I know Trebison's character, and his style of conversation; it would have been impossible not to resent it."

" Had he not escaped as he did," said Melbourne, " I would have kicked him in the midst of his friends; but I believe he was aware of my intention."

" Indeed," said Lord George, " I cannot find that any blame attaches to your conduct; I think you could not have acted otherwise. Dismiss your self-censure, dear Melbourne, and listen to some good news I have for you, or rather let this letter speak for me; for I know it will give you pleasure."

He then put a letter into Melbourne's hand, which he saw in a moment was from Mr. Searle; it was to thank Lord George for a very comfortable living to which he had, unasked, presented that worthy man.

Melbourne

Melbourne looked in Lord George's face with an expression of gratitude to which words were inadequate; and grasping both his hands, said, "More than for myself I thank you."

Lord George told Melbourne that Mayfield, the living of which Mr. Searle was now rector, was not a great distance from G—— Castle; that it was situated in a very lovely country, and though its own immediate inhabitants were but few, and those chiefly rustics, it was within reach of a very eligible society. This circumstance naturally gave a new turn to the conversation, and Lord George flattered himself he had composed the mind of his friend. He now judged it proper to return home; and Melbourne promised to follow very soon, but begged to be allowed a little while to ponder on Mr. Searle's improved situation. His feet naturally turned towards the spot where he had met Julia in the morning, and without intending it, he found himself actually within five minutes' walk of it, when the sound of a clock reminded him of the length of his
K 3 absence.

absence. The warning was in vain; he was too near a place rendered dear to him by the circumstances of that meeting, not to indulge himself with a view of it; and promising himself only to look at it, and recal the sweet expression of Julia's eyes, and then to hasten home with an expedition which might well atone for the delay, he turned the corner, and perceived again the form of Julia. He flew towards her; the deepest crimson dyed her pale cheeks on again being caught by Melbourne in the same spot; but she avoided advertng to the circumstance, and said, "For Heaven's sake, Melbourne, what further has passed between you and Mr. Trebison? he is in extreme agitation, and we quit this place suddenly early to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" exclaimed Melbourne, "cowardly rascal!"

"'Tis then as I feared," said Julia, "you have challenged him. Oh Melbourne! your impetuosity!"

"I condemn the barbarous practice as much as you can, Julia," replied he, "but—"

"Ah!"

"Ah! that but," said she, "you must conform to it."

"And the coward shuns me! flies me! but, by Heaven, I will this moment find him, and treat him as he deserves."

"Violent, rash young man," said Julia, "what are you about?"

"Shall I suffer him to go unpunished?" said Melbourne; "Julia, you would despise me if I could ——"

"If you had only my contempt to fear, Melbourne," said she——

"True," interrupted he, "the whole world will despise me."

"Hear me, Melbourne," said Julia, "and fear for me. If you fly now to execute this hasty vengeance on Mr. Trebison, to upbraid him with his cowardice in shunning your more deliberate anger, in what disgrace do you not involve me? By what means, except through me, could you have gained intelligence of his sudden flight? and in what a light ——"

"Dearest Julia," interrupted Melbourne, "pardon my hot-headed rashness; I see, I feel all you would urge—spare me, Julia."

"And indeed, Melbourne," said she, "are there not other considerations which ought to cool this ferment in your blood? You talk of condemning the custom, yet you are enraged because disappointed of risking your life, or that of a fellow-creature, on a trifling quarrel."

"Your repose! Julia, your safety ——"

"Will not be secured by your interference," resumed she, "Melbourne; situated as we are, you can do me no service, and may, indeed, render my situation less supportable than it is."

"Oh Heavens!" exclaimed he.

"Be patient, my friend," interrupted Julia, "and reflect that your avowing yourself my champion could only be detrimental to my character and to my peace. I shall not long remain with the Trebisons, and till I quit them, believe me I shall manage better without so ardent an associate."

"Have

"Have I your pardon for what is past?" said he.

"You have, indeed, on one condition: I know the intemperate warmth of your temper will make you shrink from it, but I am resolute."

"Name it," said Melbourne.

"That you pursue this quarrel no further," replied Julia.

"It is hard, but you are absolute."

"And yet," said Julia, hesitating, "I have no right to controul."

"No right! Julia," said Melbourne, grasping her hand, "depend, however, on my obedience."

He bowed on her hand—he pressed it to his heart—to his lips he dared not. After a moment's silence, Julia said, "But I must return; being at the sea-side gives me a liberty I dare not use elsewhere of being out alone; and as, in the preparations for our sudden departure, I thought I should not be missed at home, I wandered hither for a

moment's solitude and respite. Farewell, Melbourne!"

"Good God! you go hence to-morrow—when shall I see you, or hear of you again?"

"I know not," said Julia; "but no longer now."

"And when do you leave the Trebisons?" said he.

"I am wholly undecided myself," replied she, "and must be guided by circumstances: but remember, Melbourne, for your own sake, remember your promise."

"You would not have me finish from him like a coward," said Melbourne, "if he seeks ——"

"You need not fear him," interrupted Julia, "all I apprehend is from your vehemence."

"Fear nothing, my —— I do—I renew my promise, Miss Dalrymple; I will convert my anger into contempt."

"Do so," said Julia, "and farewell!"

"Oh!" said Melbourne, "we part thus, unknowing when we shall meet again!"

"Indeed,

"Indeed, Melbourne, I must leave you," says Julia, "it grows quite late, and I am fearful."

"Suffer me to see you home," said he.

"Not for the world!" replied she; "to get home alone, and unobserved, is all my wish—God bless you, Melbourne!"

"And you, dearest Miss Dalrymple!"

She left him with extreme speed, and Melbourne followed her at a distance till he saw her in safety, and then with hasty steps and agitated heart sought his own home.

He found the party very cheerful, and Mrs. Greville apparently consoled for his indifference by the attentions of Colonel Fortescue, who was evidently captivated with her. She indulged the whole of her coquettish disposition, and would fain have played off some of her airs upon Melbourne; but his thoughts were so totally occupied by the various events of the day, that he was perfectly unconscious of her aim; and when he was provoked to answer, he did it with so much unstudied simplicity, that had he

exerted his utmost talents to disconcert her, he could not have succeeded so well. Mrs. Greville knew not whether to attribute his manner to real *naïveté* or to artful malice, but could not avoid feeling discomposed herself; and unwilling to be foiled before her new admirer, gave full scope to her wit and irony, and played off all the raillery usually so successful in teasing her antagonist; but absent and *distract* Melbourne heeded her not, and answered her in the same style, till Lord George, who was well acquainted with her little foibles, and saw how unintentionally Melbourne was driving her to desperation, was in a roar of laughter. Colonel Fortescue, who was blinded by a new-born passion, attributed her cousin's mirth to the fallies of her wit; but Mrs. Greville saw perfectly well the meaning of that laugh, and grew every moment less able to support it. At length, however, the entrance of supper changed the tone of the conversation: Melbourne was no longer torn out of his reverie; Mrs. Greville received the uninterrupted attentions of the

Colonel with apparent pleasure, and Lady Susan and Lord George exchanged very intelligent glances.

In a very short time the party separated for the night, and Lord George contrived to restore his cousin to perfect good-humour, by giving Fortescue a general invitation during their stay, and Lady Susan included his sister in the compliment.

Melbourne, who found it would be impossible to sleep, sat down and wrote the letters which follow in the next chapter.

CHAP. XIII.

LETTERS.

" TO MR. SEARLE.

" FOR the first time in my life, my most excellent friend, I this day found it impossible to write to you. You will readily guess that such reluctance could only arise from my having something to relate which would meet your disapprobation. Yes, I am embarked in an affair which I am conscious you would condemn; and yet, perhaps, not more severely than my own heart has done from the very moment in which it was too late to recede. In short, this morning I have sent a challenge; and though my adversary has cowardly

cowardly withdrawn himself from me, and thus I shall avoid the crime of bloodshed, I am too well convinced that this circumstance by no means exculpates me. I am not less to blame because my opponent is a dastard; had he possessed the spirit of a man, I should have fought him, and one of us, in all probability, would have fallen. The agitation I have suffered ever since the moment when the challenge was sent, is alone sufficient to convince me of my error, had not you ever warned me of it: yet if provocation could ever justify such a proceeding, I might plead the conduct of my enemy in extenuation of mine. A dastardly insult offered to an amiable, defenceless female; unprovoked contempt lavished upon myself; the grossest, the most opprobrious language, as well as an attempt to injure me in the opinion of some persons to whom I was utterly unknown—these are the injuries I meant to avenge—injuries amenable to no human tribunal! yet such as human nature cannot but feel and resent. Upon what principle duelling can be

be justified, except by that arbitrary, and often erroneous one, the law of honour, I know not; but surely, if we allow the prevalence of a moral sense, some deference must be due to the universal consent of men in this instance. In all civilized nations, the laws of honour have obtained. A quick sense of injuries seems natural to a delicate and feeling heart, and an aptness to avenge them, seems innate in every bosom. By what means can we punish, nay, at what bar can we arraign, the man who wounds our tenderest feeling by a conduct not illegal, but most keenly torturing. If some such visionary tribunal as that of worldly honour, had not been established, a reciprocation of offences would have continued for ever; there would have been no check on those brutes who are now a little restrained by the fear of a duel:—the strong would have trampled on the weak and the defenceless; injuries would have multiplied between man and man; the world would have been a scene of endless hostilities, and no one could have hoped

hoped to pass unhurt through it. Perhaps I am willing to seek reasons to extenuate my conduct; and if I am arguing fallaciously, I am sure that you will detect me, and set me right. Yet is there not some excuse to be made for the warmth of youth—the greatness of the provocation? I will say no more on this subject—the cowardice of my adversary happily releases me from the actual guilt of murder; and if in this instance I have erred, your counsels, my most excellent monitor, shall guard me from similar faults in fortune. On a more pleasing topic I shall find less to say; for it is impossible adequately to express the joy I feel for the very deserved promotion you have lately received. That Lord George could distinguish and reward your merit, and wholly uninfluenced by any solicitation (for I knew not of the living till I saw your letter), is a new argument with me to love and esteem this invaluable friend. That his happiness seems established on a permanent footing, is a considerable addition to mine; and I rejoice sincerely

sincerely in the idea that you will now be within reach of more frequent visits from your most affectionate and grateful

“ HENRY MELBOURNE.”

“ TO MR. SEYMOUR.

“ Agitated, and unable to sleep, my dear Seymour, your anxious friend seeks to restore composure to his heart by unbosoming his emotions to you. This day has been productive of the most delicious and the most painful events; and it is owing to the cowardice of another that I am not in a few hours to risk a life which is but just become of value to me. Oh Seymour! this morning brought me accidentally into the presence of her whom I have so long adored without a hope; I saw her, I conversed with her, I soothed her sorrows, I obtained a look—Oh that look! were I never to see her more, millions of ages would not obliterate that look from my memory; it told me that I was dear to her—it spoke more than language could have done. Scarcely was the
first

first tumult of happiness a little subsided, ere a gross insult, offered to her, roused all my passions in a moment; I could not bear what followed. I sent a challenge to the offender, but the dastard flies my just resentment; and though I have been all day tormented with the reproaches of my own heart, for having given way to my desire of vengeance, yet so at war with reason and moderation is the irascible spirit of man, I cannot but regret that he shuns the meeting; yet ought I not to rejoice that I am spared the actual guilt of murder, however equally erroneous my intentions may have been? Oh Seymour! I had not your fortitude to enable me to avoid fighting, convinced as I have ever been, in my cool moments, of its impropriety, in whatever light you consider it; yet at the moment when that conviction ought to have restrained my rage, my judgment, my principles all deserted me at once, and I weakly yielded to that anger, when, if I had checked it at first, I might have avoided the extremity to which I afterwards
reduced

reduced myself. But let me quit a subject pregnant only with pain and self-reproach; let me rather ruminate on the delightful consciousness that Julia does not regard me with indifference. When I was with you, my friend, you were disposed to flatter me with hopes that I was dear to her; but I dared not believe you; and now it were perhaps better that I should still have supposed her insensible towards me. But the very moment before I saw her, I had concluded an hour's meditation on the subject, with a resolution to endeavour to conquer my attachment; for, in fact, what have I to hope? my most sanguine expectations scarcely dare point to a successful end to my passions, for shall I solicit the elegant, the delicate Miss Dalrymple to share the fate of a dependant and a beggar? Can I reduce her to my level? Can I expose her to all the inconveniences of a restricted fortune? Can I seclude her from the world, from that society which she was formed to like and adorn? Oh Davenport! what answer does impartial Reason give to these

these queries? That I ought to do nothing of all this, and therefore that I ought to banish from my mind all thoughts of those peculiar charms which have won my tenderest love: yet how difficult is this exertion rendered by the too expressive glance which this blessed morning caught my eyes! Oh! let me not deceive myself! let me not imagine that Julia loves me, “and for my Juno grasp a cloud!”

“But I shall see her no longer; the cowardice of my opponent takes her hence, and the transient view of her will be as a cheering vision of the night; for Heaven only knows when I shall again behold her angelic countenance. Her delicacy forbids any clandestine attempts to visit her; and her situation is such that I shall be prevented from seeing her openly. Months, years may elapse before I am again so blessed; and in the interval what may not happen? I dare not look that way!—Let me turn my eyes to the more smiling prospects of my Seymour. You know I have ever hoped that a moment would arrive when
your

your fair fame would be cleared, and you would be restored to every blessing of which your misfortunes have deprived you for a time. The dawn of prosperity in your fortunes seems an auspicious omen; for be it ever remembered, my friend, that even though the cruel and unmerited stigma on your name were completely done away, money would still be necessary to crown all your wishes. Go on then, animated by the elastic spring of hope; go on in the path you have entered, and prosper, and accept the happy auguries I form in your favour. I look forward with expectation to the moment when I shall see your innocence and constancy rewarded by the smile of your mistress, and the cordiality of your friend; and to see you thus happy, how well contented shall I be to hold only an inferior place in your affection! Would to Heaven I had as reasonable an expectation to look forward to! but a dark impenetrable cloud hangs over the future prospects of my life, and deprives me of the fairy visions of the flatterer

flatterer Hope. If she does no more than flatter, I am always disposed to court her smile; for her golden promises scatter flowers about the path of life, and enable us to go forward with energy and exertion, when, were her Syren songs silenced, we should, perhaps, have no stimulus sufficient to prompt our best endeavours; besides, every thing that confers only visionary bliss, is to be welcomed with gratitude, for the gay delusion at least cheats us into a temporary forgetfulness of real evils. Look forward then always, my dear Seymour, to smiling prospects, and let "Hope" be ever the motto of you, and your truly affectionate friend,

"HENRY MELBOURNE."

A little composed by the endeavours which, as usual, he had made to reason his friend Seymour into a more happy frame of mind, Melbourne now retired to rest, and for a very short interval sunk into a slumber, from which the early beams of the sun soon roused

roused him. He arose from his restless pillow; and, supporting with pain the interval between that time and the hour when he might hope to hear from Trebison, he wandered down to the sea shore, to lose, in the contemplation of the most magnificent work of nature, the irritating remembrance of his own concerns. The serenity of the morning, the lively song of the birds, the bright beams of the early sun dancing on the green waves of the ocean, the majestic ships at a distance, the vessels scattered over the calm bosom of the main, and dotting it all over with their shining sails, the cheerful voices of the mariners, and the smiling aspect of all nature, failed not of their usual effect on Melbourne's happy mind. He began to consider his situation on the bright side; this quarrel with Trebison seemed now the only black speck in the whole prospect, and that was on the point of being erased. The tone of voice with which Julia had pronounced the word "brother;" the expressive look which followed—all convinced him

of

of what it was rapture to believe, that he was dear to her. Animated by such an idea, of what exertions did he not feel himself capable! Happy in his friendships, looking with gratitude and delight on Mr. Searle's improved situation, Melbourne began to blame himself for having indulged a black melancholy and depressing perturbation of spirits. "But such," said he to himself, "will ever be the consequence of acting so as to incur the reproaches of conscience. While self-approbation makes a paradise of a desert, self-accusation must undoubtedly cast a gloomy hue over the fairest prospects. And perhaps one can scarcely imagine a more exquisite torture, than to be admitted into Heaven itself with a capacity only to behold every thing in the blackest colours. The miser, who, in the midst of riches, fears the approach of actual penury, suffers more from poverty than the industrious peasant, who enjoys the scanty fare he earns. The being to whom a perverted imagination, or a wretched conscience discolours every object,

feels more exquisite distress than the prisoner, whose innocence enables him to look forward with hope; so that if it were possible to imagine a soul not only free from self-reproach, but conscious of acts of peculiar virtue, cast into the black regions appointed for the wicked, the smiles of the "deity within" would throw a cheering lustre round even that desolate mansion. From within is happiness or misery; and internal happiness can only be preserved by avoiding vice and error; this I feel, this I have ever felt, and this therefore I will ever believe! No external objects, no temporary gratifications, no prosperity of situation can confer a happiness equal to the internal consciousness of virtue! No outward circumstances, however deplorable, can affect the mind like the reproaches of the heart! What misery have I ever undergone equal to the perturbation, the self-condemnation I have experienced since I yesterday blindly gave way to anger, and a desire of revenge? and how shall I
ever

ever be sufficiently thankful that I am spared the actual completion of my guilt?"

From these reflections, Melbourne wandered to his future prospects; and Mr. Searle being happily settled in affluence, his wishes resumed their old bent, and he determined again to enter that sacred profession to which he had ever looked forward as the end and aim of his studies. One great motive for embarking in a more active line, the possibility of sooner adding to the comforts of Mr. Searle, being now removed, he gladly indulged the wish he had so early formed, and looked forward with hope to a country living, literary ease, and retirement, and his bold ideas even graced that loved retirement with the nymph-like form of Julia. Lost in the visions of such happiness, Trebison had wholly faded from his mind, when the words, "Good morrow, my honey!" in an Irish accent, vibrated on his ears, and a tap on the shoulder recalled his roving fancy from its paradisaical excursion to reality and Fitzpatrick, the Irishman,

who had the day before been the associate of Trebison."

Melbourne looked round, and returned the salutation, when Fitzpatrick exclaimed, "Arrah now, my jewel, but I dare say you're expecting good news from Trebison; and faith I've brought it you; and if I were not some how or other engaged to him, I'd offer to be your second in the business, but one can't be second to two at a time."

"He will meet me, then?" said Melbourne, with an air of vague astonishment.

"Aye, by Jafus! my boy," replied Fitzpatrick, "and only wishes you'd appointed to-day instead of to-morrow; but stay, let him spake his own mind to you; here's a bit of a note that will tell you all."

Melbourne took the note which Fitzpatrick held to him, and eagerly tore it open; but he could scarcely tell what to believe when he read as follows:

"Mr. Trebison is extremely sorry to be disappointed of the singular honour of meeting Mr. Melbourne to-morrow at the place
and

and hour fixed on; but a prior, and more pleasing engagement with a lady calls him to town this morning.

"P.S. Damme, you scoundrel, do you dare to challenge a gentleman?"

"This is most extraordinary," said Melbourne; "pray, Sir, did you mean to insult me?"

"Me, my dear," replied Fitzpatrick, "no, not I; but if you think I did, I'll just step for pistols, and give you satisfaction on the spot."

"By no means," said Melbourne, "but I should like to understand this business; Mr. Trebison here tells me that he goes to town this morning."

"Indeed!" cried Fitzpatrick, "now if that's the case, I'll follow him up, and fight him instantly, for sending me to you with a lie in my mouth. He shall eat the lie I warrant him, and he shall find it confoundedly bitter too, I can tell him that; but how, how, what's the matter, what says he?"

"He says," answered Melbourne, "that a prior and more pleasing engagement with a lady calls him to town this morning."

"Stay here a minute, my jewel," said Fitzpatrick, "I'll just step and enquire into the truth of all this, and bring you word instantly. By St. Patrick, but I believe Trebison's a coward! I began to smell him yesterday when he stole off the parade; and if he is gone to town, I'm at your service, my boy, and will have a post-chaise and four instantly ready to pursue him, and I'll be your second, and we'll draw some of his coward blood, I warrant you."

"I am obliged to you for your kind intentions," replied Melbourne, "but if Trebison is really gone to town, I shall not think it worth while to pursue such a villian."

"That's as you please, my dear," returned the Irishman; "for my part I'll be after him, and fight to the last drop of my blood: for why? he has put a lie in my mouth; but 'twas his lie, not mine, for nobody shall ever have to say Fitzpatrick is a liar!"

"I'll

"I'll walk with you to the town," said Melbourne, "and gain some insight into this business."

Fitzpatrick, who, as we have seen, was inclined to be Melbourne's friend, readily accepted this offer, and both stimulated by curiosity, made the best of their way; but though they were very quick, Trebison had the start of them, having been gone in a post-chaise and four twenty minutes before they reached his house.

Fitzpatrick made all possible offers of assistance to Melbourne in pursuit and chastisement of Trebison, and Melbourne lost much ground in the Irishman's opinion by declining to accept any of them; in fact, except for the loss of Julia, our hero was not sorry that his adversary had evaded his vengeance, of which he had now lost the earnest desire he felt at the moment of provocation; and having taken leave of his Irish friend, returned home in time for the breakfast of the family.

Mrs. Greville rallied him upon his absence, and said, laughing, "Either we are become quite disagreeable, Lady Susan, or there is some strong attraction elsewhere; for we were scarcely favoured with a sight of Mr. Melbourne yesterday, and this morning, to all appearance, his rambles have extended pretty far; I heard him leave the house many hours ago."

"You are very watchful, cousin Greville," said Lord George, "a man must have the cunning of a serpent to steal a march upon you. I am curious to know what could have induced your ears to have begun listening so early."

"I did not attack you, George," said Mrs. Greville; "therefore you need not interfere; I spoke to Mr. Melbourne."

"I am sure," returned Melbourne, bowing, "I cannot but be highly flattered at the interest you are so good as to take in me; but I am very sorry it should deprive you of your rest."

Lady

Lady Susan smiled, Lord George laughed, and the conversation grew more general.

By the first opportunity Melbourne expressed to Lord George his satisfaction at the present termination of his affair with Trebison; and though that gentleman thought it would be necessary for him to renew the quarrel in future, he entertained secret hopes that he should be able to decline it entirely, not being of a disposition to bear malice, or to pursue a trifling offence at the hazard of his own life, or that of a fellow-creature.

CHAP. XIV.

AN ECLAIRCISSEMENT.

THEIR society was now agreeably increased by the Colonel and his sister, who spent almost every day with them. There was an air of languid melancholy about Miss Fortescue, that rendered her peculiarly interesting to Melbourne; and yet through her habitual dejection there appeared occasional gleams of vivacity which shewed her naturally cheerful. With the romantic enthusiasm of youth, Melbourne viewed this amiable creature a prey to sadness, and concluded it must arise from a disappointment in love; nor could he any way account for

a woman so pleasing remaining unmarried, for Miss Fortescue was five or six and twenty, but by her having already experienced an unfortunate attachment, Colonel Fortescue, though constitutionally lively and impetuous, never spoke to Arabella but in the tender tone of sympathy and affection; a tone that Melbourne, by nature feeling and kind, adopted intuitively, and thereby became the favourite companion of Miss Fortescue. She was a timid horsewoman, and in their morning airings preferred being driven in the cabriolet, and resigned her spirited steed to Mrs. Greville, who was quite without fear, and who readily accompanied the Colonel. Lord George usually drove Lady Susan in the phaeton; and thus it frequently fell to Melbourne's lot to conduct Arabella—an office which he performed with more pleasure, because the arrangement seemed agreeable to her. As he was one evening observing her, as she was speaking in a low voice to her brother, an idea suddenly started into his mind, which he was

L 6 determined

determined to develope the first time he should be alone with her; and formed a sort of plan by which he might, without any apparent intention, introduce the subject which he wished. For some days Fortune seemed bent on frustrating his projects; at length, however, the party was arranged as usual, and Melbourne found himself in possession of the opportunity he so ardently desired. He led the conversation to a subject never displeasing to feeling minds, the effects and duration of first impressions, and the affection sometimes inspired by acquaintances formed accidentally, and apparently with very little prospect of permanency. "For my part," said Melbourne, "I acquired one of the few friends I possess in that very accidental manner; a young man, Miss Fortescue, though unfortunate, truly estimable, and singularly amiable. I was enabled to offer him a trifling accommodation at a wretched little ale-house, where bad weather obliged us both to pass the night; and in consequence, we continued
out

our journey together, and I found in him a valuable, and I believe, a sincere friend. Few people ever interested me more; and indeed his circumstances were peculiarly unfortunate. With every requisite to succeed both in friendship and in love, my unhappy friend was miserable in both. He had been imprudent, but he had never been guilty, though he was represented so to his mistress and his friend, and was banished for ever from them. His early extravagances had hurt his fortune, and this unjust accusation completed his ruin.—But I am deviating into particulars.”

“You have interested me for your friend, Mr. Melbourne,” said Miss Fortescue, “and I dare assure you that his secret will be as safe with me as —”

“I do not doubt it,” replied Melbourne, “but I need not fatigue you with a melancholy tale.”

“If it is not trespassing too much,” said Miss Fortescue, “I would request you to tell me all you can; I am really interested

for

for this young man. Are there no means of clearing his fame to his mistress and her brother? for surely a person so amiable as you describe him to be, cannot have lost their affection, though they might have withdrawn their confidence."

Melbourne felt an internal satisfaction he could scarcely conceal; he was almost convinced his conjecture was true; he had not said that the friend and the mistress of the hero of his tale were brother and sister, but Arabella had seized the circumstance, and adopted the idea.

"I fear there are no means, Miss Fortescue," replied Melbourne, "to reinstate him in their good opinion. The story gained ground, and was pretty universally believed; he was obliged to quit the army."

"He was in the army then?" interrupted Arabella, with quickness.

"He was," replied Melbourne; "and being thus bereft of his hopes, he was, when I became acquainted with him, earning his daily bread by those literary talents once exerted only for his amusement. Had not his

his native pride been subdued by misfortune, he would have thought this a degradation to a man of family."

"He was of family too?" asked she.

Melbourne bowed, and continued:—"When I last heard from him, however, he was engaged in a mercantile house of great respectability, and was rapidly gaining money; but fortune, he added, was of no value to him; he had lost all that could give a relish to it."

"May I ask his name?" said Arabella.

Melbourne had not appeared to notice the evident confusion and embarrassment of his fair companion, yet watched her countenance with peculiar exactness while he pronounced the name of Seymour. The fire of expectation vanished from her eye, and was succeeded by a look of languid disappointment. Melbourne was convinced; but fearing to oppress her delicate spirits too much, resolved to find some other moment for the denouement. The remainder of their ride was more silent than usual,
except

except that once Melbourne stopped the horses on the top of a hill, to contemplate the beauty of the prospect.

"You are an admirer of Nature, Mr. Melbourne," said Miss Fortescue.

"To enthusiasm," replied he; "and I have now a double pleasure in gazing on such a scene as this, from having once stopped in a similar spot with my friend Seymour. Our ideas exactly coincided."

"You seem much attached to this Seymour, Mr. Melbourne," said Arabella, faintly smiling.

"I am, indeed," answered Melbourne, "and I think, Miss Fortescue, from the knowledge I have of your disposition, you would have liked him;—he was sensible and amiable, his manners elegant, and his conversation interesting; his misfortunes first gained my pity, and his delicacy respecting the persons concerned in them, my admiration; their names he would by no means mention, though he described this fair one and her brother as possessing a thousand virtues,

virtues. Nor do you be offended, Miss Fortescue, if I add, that the character my poor Seymour drew of his mistress, seemed to me to resemble you."

Arabella sighed, and said, "Can I be offended at what is certainly a high compliment?"

"At the bluntness of it you very well might," replied Melbourne, "had I meant it as flattery."

"I should be glad to hear," resumed Arabella, "that at some future period your friend was reinstated in the good opinion of his mistress and her brother; you have made him an interest in my heart."

"He would thank me most sincerely," replied Melbourne; "and if any thing could shake his constancy, it would be the gratitude he would feel to you."

Again the conversation dropped; and they reached home without any thing further being said on the subject. Miss Fortescue seemed to treat Melbourne as an approved friend, and Mrs. Greville chose to imagine more

more than appeared. She threw out some sarcastic hints, but the Colonel replied to them so seriously, and so very positively assured her that she was mistaken, that she forbore to repeat them; and Arabella, who had heard nothing about them, was not deterred by them from conversing chiefly with Melbourne.

Colonel Fortescue, who had seldom seen his sister so well pleased with company, was in amazing spirits; and finding that, for some reason or other, she certainly liked Melbourne, he became warmly his friend; for so truly was he attached by natural affection, and by compassion to her, that her inclinations were sure to guide his. Lady Susan thought with Mrs. Greville, that a mutual affection was growing between them, and rejoiced in a prospect which promised so comfortable an establishment for Melbourne, who, she was well convinced, would make Miss Fortescue a most excellent husband.

The very next morning, as they were waiting for the carriages, Miss Fortescue and Melbourne were alone in the room,
when

when letters were brought in. She looked at the directions, and coloured most extremely as she pushed one across the table to Melbourne. She looked in his face, and the blood suddenly forsook her cheeks as she read the address. He had not appeared to notice her, and said carelessly, "It is from Seymour."

"My God!" exclaimed Arabella.

Melbourne rose, flew to her, and supported her, for he thought she would faint.

"Forgive me, Miss Fortescue," said he, "and hear me with patience while I tell you that my friend is innocent, is most estimable, and that his name is Davenport!"

"It is my Davenport!" cried Arabella, "Oh Mr. Melbourne!"

"A vague conjecture struck me," said Melbourne, "that it might be thus; but I have tried it too severely—dear Arabella! say you forgive me."

"Can I feel offended with the man who tells me Davenport is innocent and faithful! Believe me, Mr. Melbourne, my emotions
are

are most joyful, and to you I am most grateful."

"Your noble sincerity," replied Melbourne, "charms and affects me. How happy will my Seymour be!"

"You still call him Seymour," said Arabella.

"I knew him by that name," he said; "it was only when assured of my friendship, that he confessed to me his real family, that if ever I had an opportunity, I might endeavour to exculpate him."

"Oh Mr. Melbourne!" replied Miss Fortescue, "this has long been a thorn festering in my heart. To know my Davenport innocent, even though I may see him no more, gives ease to my oppressed spirits."

"See him no more!" said Melbourne, "how can you fear it?"

"You are, no doubt, informed," answered she, "that the accusations against him were of a most degrading nature, and that unless they could be most thoroughly and publicly

publicly wiped away, my brother's jealous honour would never be appeased."

"Do not, my dear Miss Fortescue," said Melbourne, "give way now to black apprehensions; welcome this bright dawn of happiness, and believe, that since an explanation is thus fortunately begun, all will end well."

"I have so long been accustomed," replied Arabella, "to look with an eye of despair on that subject, that this gleam of hope dazzles me; but I will retire for a few minutes. I would not wish to encounter Mrs. Greville's eye; let the rest set off, and I will join you."

The timid Arabella escaped just in time to avoid the keen glances of Mrs. Greville, and Melbourne with some difficulty persuaded the rest of the party to set off, and permit him and his fair companion to overtake them. The commencement of their ride was silent;—Melbourne respected her feelings too much to speak; he saw, however, in her eye, a dubious expression of hope
struggling

struggling with fear; and now and then a big tear swelled up, and threatened to fall. At last she said, in a tremulous voice, "Mr. Melbourne, I am very weak, very foolish; but I trust your goodness will excuse me—may I ask, have you read your friend's letter?"

"I have not," replied Melbourne.

"Indeed," resumed Arabella, "I know not why I should ask; he would scarcely mention me, who have been so long withdrawn from his society."

"But never from his heart; lovely Miss Fortescue," answered Melbourne; "though it was merely a vague surmise that led me to imagine you were the object of my Seymour's love, (for he ever religiously kept the secret of your name), yet I can assure you that I have never had a letter from him, which did not, in the most unaffected manner, prove his inviolable constancy, permit me to add, both to yourself and your brother."

"Alas!"

"Alas! Mr. Melbourne," said she, "do you think it possible he ever can regain his fair fame, and resume, unblemished, his station in society?"

"I am so persuaded, my dear Miss Fortescue," replied Melbourne, "that my friend is perfectly innocent of the great fault imputed to him, and that whatever were the errors of his youth, they no ways attached to his real character; and as his conduct since his retirement has been eminently meritorious, I cannot but hope universal justice will at last prevail, and our amiable Seymour be restored to all he has lost. But, were it to happen otherwise——"

"Ah! Mr. Melbourne, "had I only myself to consider, Heaven knows how readily I would overlook the opinion of the world, and retire to share the obscurity of one so injured; but I have a brother, and the honour of a soldier is dearer to him than life. That brother has been to me the kindest, tenderest friend; he has consulted all my inclinations, indulged all my pensiveness, neglected

neglected his own amusements to sooth and console me; and he deserves from me the most scrupulous attention. His former friendship for my Davenport can only be equalled by his present anger against him; and I well know that unless every imputation against him could be completely done away, I dare not encourage the slightest hope of regaining his assent."

"And I will venture to prophesy," replied Melbourne, "that this so desired event will take place. It cannot be, but that a soldier, brave, generous, and feeling as Colonel Fortescue, will yield to conviction, and himself assist in clearing away the stigma so unjustly thrown on my unhappy friend."

"But who shall plead his cause? who shall seek to bring conviction to the mind of my brother?"

"Oh! if I had talents or influence for such a task, how gladly would I undertake it! but, no," added he, "it is too presumptuous in me to think of it."

“ And who,” said Arabella, “ so fit as one who so well knows, and so generously loves the subject of our conversation? Oh Mr. Melbourne! my brother is what you describe him—he is brave, generous, and feeling; but can I, ought I to press such a task on you?”

“ You honour me in your wishes, dear Miss Fortescue,” replied Melbourne, “ and if you think me qualified to mould the heart of your noble brother——”

“ Indeed, Mr. Melbourne,” said she, with a smile, “ he loves and respects you; I think you would have—but forgive me for thus urging a point so delicate.”

“ Be assured,” replied he, “ that I will not delay to use my best endeavours.”

“ And if you succeed,” said Arabella, “ what shall I not owe to you?—the happiness of my future life will be your gift!”

Melbourne pressed the fair hand of Miss Fortescue to his lips, and before he withdrew it, they were joined by Mrs. Greville, who said, with a sarcastic smile, “ Well met,

young folks; you seem deeply engaged in a most interesting conversation; I won't interrupt you.—Come, Colonel."

"Brother," said Arabella."

"My dear Bell," said Colonel Fortescue, with a smile, "what wouldst thou with me?"

"She wishes thee at the devil," replied Mrs. Greville, "or any where but here; there are occasions when the dearest friend is one too many."

"You are much mistaken, Madam," answered Miss Fortescue, "my brother is always ——"

"Come, come, good folks," said Melbourne, "Mrs. Greville's ponies are as spirited as herself, and won't bear to be thus stopped in their career. Are Lord George and Lady Susan on before us?"

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Greville, "go thy ways for a keen one."

Melbourne whipped his little spirited steeds, and they soon conveyed him and his fair companion out of the reach even

of

of their mistress's laugh, which a little offended Arabella, who expressed her dislike to Mrs. Greville in a very unqualified manner, and her fears that she would draw her brother in. "And though," added she, "she is pleasant enough for an hour or two, I fear she would not be a pleasant companion for life."

Melbourne remarked that Lord George, who had always known her, thought well of her.

"So do not I," replied Arabella, "though I have known so little of her. Lord George likes her from habit, and is no longer struck with her faults; but I cannot say but that it would make me miserable to see her become my brother's wife, could I be ever so far removed from the ill effects of such a connexion!"

"I do not think it probable," said Melbourne; "the Colonel is pleased with her vivacity, but more than mere *agrément* is required to make a conquest of a heart like his."

“ There is no knowing,” said Arabella, “ how much hold such lures as she throws out, may take even of the proudest of you lords of the creation; with all your sovereign wisdom, you are all mere dupes to the designing of our sex, and few of you can resist those attractions which are evidently levelled at yourselves.”

Melbourne smiled, and felt delighted that Miss Fortescue was so much at ease as to resume that vivacity which her countenance declared to be natural to her.

A very little time more brought them in sight of their friends, and without any further particular conversation, they concluded their morning excursion. Arabella's spirits however hourly improved; though sometimes when her fair eyes glanced at her brother, she felt a pang of fear cross her heart, and Melbourne, who watched and read her looks, determined to take the earliest opportunity of introducing the subject to Colonel Fortescue.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

ARGUMENTATION.

THE letter which produced the eclaireissement related in the last chapter, was not long, and informed Melbourne of some circumstances in Mr. Seymour's family connexions, which were very likely to lead to some change in his situation; and it was not long before the following answer arrived from Mr. Searle :

“ TO MR. MELBOURNE.

“ And is it my once candid Melbourne who seeks to veil in sophistry the ingenuous convictions of his heart, and to cloud over,

with false and unfounded arguments, those principles, and those feelings which it ought to be the study of every man to preserve inviolate? Oh Henry! how unlike yourself! but I need not reproach you with your error—the voice of Conscience speaks too loudly in your yet uncorrupted bosom to make it necessary for me to disrobe your reasoning of its flimsy trappings, and to point out to you the true, the christian principles on which it is your duty to act, and to judge of your conduct. The emotions you acknowledge to have felt, prove to me how accurately the voice of Conscience pointed out to you the guilt you had incurred, which, though happily rendered nugatory, is almost equally a blemish in your character. I have often warned you against that too quick susceptibility of injuries, that erroneous pride which takes fire at the least shadow of provocation, that irritability which is so readily excited by the slightest ridicule; but let me now more seriously warn you against adopting a system of fallacious reasoning.

soning, which, if you indulge yourself in it, will wholly warp your natural judgment, and cloud over every principle within you. Sophistry, my dear Melbourne, when applied to real and invariable morality, confounds the distinctions between right and wrong; throws false lights over every action, and makes that appear dubious which ought to be (and which is in fact) distinct and certain—the sacred barrier that parts virtue and vice. But I need say no more; I am certain your ingenuous heart aches to agony, with the conviction of your error; and I trust you are sufficiently awakened to be in no danger of again falling into it. I rejoice that you are spared the actual guilt of murder, which, however it might have been glossed over by the erroneous, and certainly unnecessary laws of honour, would never have suffered you to have known another moment's peace. Oh Henry! in the peaceful shades of Linwood you perceived and felt the insufficiency of those boasted laws to regulate the actions of responsible beings.

Let not the heart I believed so thoroughly principled, be corrupted by the false glare of that very system once so justly despised. But I will have done; I need not indeed apologize for continuing on a subject so interesting, and so important; but I trust that you will need no further comment—I trust that in future no provocation would have power to induce my Henry to send a summons to death to any of his fellow-creatures; and that he would have the real magnanimity to decline accepting such a summons from any one—a species of magnanimity far more truly heroic than the mere act of desperate and mechanical courage of facing an enemy! Oh Henry! if you cannot in future exert this true fortitude, what will become of your unshaken integrity? Let not my apprehensions for the safety of your character, of your morals, damp the joy with which I can now offer you that further assistance you require. Yes, Melbourne, it is now my pleasure to plan your future establishment, to place you again at college, to give your abilities an opportunity of finishing that improvement necessary

necessary to your obtaining a permanent situation. Let no more time be wasted; remember that youth is the season for mental improvement, and that the hours which are now lost in idleness and dissipation, can return no more, and will leave behind them no trace which in future you will recollect with pleasure. You need no longer depend on uncertainties; the situation to which your friend has raised me, gladdens my heart, as it enables me to concur with your wishes, for I hope you have not so far lost all relish for that activity which alone can ensure success, as not readily to withdraw yourself from your present situation, and resume your studies at Cambridge. But I am writing with too much asperity; some expressions in your letter, so unlike my former amiable and candid pupil, have led me into this caustic humour; yet I rejoice that you have laid before me the train of fallacious argument by which you had tried to reconcile your heart to the error you had committed; an error which I hope and trust you will now abjure

for ever: in which hope, my dear Melbourne, I once more invite you to my heart, to my confidence, to my warmest affection; and forgetting entirely this temporary suspension of my esteem, remain

“ Your truly affectionate friend,

“ WILFORD SEARLE.”

This letter was scarcely necessary to settle Melbourne's opinions respecting the conduct it so severely censured. His own conscience had already convinced him of its impropriety, and sufficiently determined him against any future repetition of it. The revival of his original and favourite project, of completing his studies at Cambridge, and of obtaining a situation in the church, gave new energy to his mental powers; and while he hourly reproached himself for the inactivity in which he was loitering away the present moments, he saw with pleasure the approach of the period fixed for the return of the party to their respective homes. Yet, though anxious to act for himself,

Melbourne

Melbourne was not of a disposition to neglect the arduous commission which the interesting Miss Fortescue so much wished him to undertake, and he sought, with much impatience, an opportunity for a private conference with the Colonel. Day after day elapsed, till now they had only one day remaining previous to their departure, and no occasion had yet offered. Perhaps Melbourne feared, as much as he wished, to enter on the subject; till at length finding he had really no time to lose, and happening to observe the object of his search alone on the sands, he hastily joined him. The unreserved and easy manners of Colonel Fortescue soon made Melbourne forget the embarrassment occasioned by the task he had to execute, and they conversed for some time on various subjects, without his finding means to introduce that nearest his heart. At length the conversation turned on different shades of character; and the Colonel, with the warmth of a brave and gallant soldier, declared that he could readily pardon any

offences that arose merely from the warmth and indiscretion of youth; but that if once a man forfeited his claim to unblemished honour, it was, in his opinion, all over with him.

“Should you be equally severe,” said Melbourne, “whether the stigma was just or unjust?”

“It is hardly possible,” replied Fortescue, “that a stigma of the kind I describe should attach to any character undeservedly; but even imagining it possible, it is necessary, among men of the world, Mr. Melbourne, not only to act with propriety, but sedulously to avoid all occasions of censure.”

“And yet,” said Melbourne, “surely if a man existed, who, from having committed some venial errors, had been suspected of more atrocious enormities, and who, though he had abjured his first indiscretions, had forfeited the good opinion of society, it would be an action worthy a man of indisputable honour, worthy of Colonel Fortescue, to take such a being by the hand, to stand

stand forth his champion, and by giving him countenance and protection, reinstate him in his rank and situation in society."

"It is impossible," said the Colonel; such a situation once lost, can never be regained; for instance, if a man refuses to fight a duel, can a soldier of honour notice him?"

"Surely, surely," said Melbourne, "it requires more courage to decline a challenge than to accept one."

"It is a species of courage, Mr. Melbourne," replied the Colonel, "that belongs more to gentlemen of your profession, than of mine; believe me, I mean to throw no slight upon the church; I reverence the church, but its maxims on such points cannot influence a soldier."

"Yet," said Melbourne, "many causes may concur, independently of the peaceable motives inculcated by the church, to justify a man for declining a summons to fight;—what, if I have injured my brother, or my friend, shall I risk the taking away his life also? Shall I hazard my own life to defend actions

actions of which I may not be ashamed? My opponent probably has relatives, sisters, perhaps a wife, a mother—shall I plunge them into distress, because I have before acted wrong?”

“ My dear Mr. Melbourne,” said Colonel Fortescue, “ the whole bias of your education and habits of life lead you to think on these subjects absolutely opposite to my opinion; honour is the idol, it is the essence of a soldier.”

“ And yet, Colonel,” replied Melbourne, “ with the strong bias, the habits you describe, I am not insensible to the charms of this idol. I would only wish that it should not supersede the obligations of morality and benevolence; I would only wish that an unfounded blemish cast on that lovely idol, should not wholly deprive a worthy and estimable man of the affection of his friends,—his rank in society; I would wish that such a man as Colonel Fortescue, whose honour is superior to all suspicion, could have the fortitude, the magnanimity to overlook

look ——” He hesitated—he was deviating into particulars, and the Colonel said, “It appears to me that your words have some peculiar application; am I right in my conjecture?”

“You are,” said Melbourne; “I have, indeed, a friend whom I love, whom I esteem, who labours under a stigma totally undeserved, which has ruined him in the opinion of those most dear to him. He has since lived in obscurity, but some events will probably soon occur that will recal him to the notice of the world. Oh! would Colonel Fortescue step forward to take him by the hand, to prove by his countenance that the stigma was unfounded, the justification of my friend would be complete; his innocence, his real honour would need no other proof.”

The Colonel appeared strongly agitated, but replied with forced composure, “Your mode of argument, Mr. Melbourne, though highly flattering to me, is not convincing. The blemish would rather attach to me; but

but who is this friend? and what is—what has been his situation?”

Melbourne could scarcely support the scrutinizing look with which Colonel Fortescue now regarded him; but answered, “I would wish to interest your feelings for my friend before I disclose the particulars of his situation.”

“Feeling, Mr. Melbourne,” answered the Colonel, “must have nothing to do in the business; I have already proved that,” said he; (but his countenance changed as he spoke) “yes, I have already done violence to my feelings in such a cause.”

“Oh!” said Melbourne, eagerly, “would you had obeyed them! would you could now obey them!”

“Mr. Melbourne ———”

“My dear Colonel,” said Melbourne, grasping his arm, “have you never repented sacrificing your feelings at the shrine of honour?”

“Can a soldier,” replied the Colonel, “ever repent a sacrifice made at that shrine?”

“Alas!”

"Alas!" said Melbourne, "and can then that imaginary goddess totally annihilate friendship and affection?"

"Injuries intended, though not performed, can do it," said Fortescue.

"By all that's sacred," said Melbourne, ardently, "Davenport never intended you an injury!"

"Davenport!" exclaimed Colonel Fortescue, trembling with agitation.

"Why," said Melbourne, "should I longer disguise it? Davenport has not been less in your thoughts than in mine."

"Mr. Melbourne," said Fortescue, coolly, "this is a very unexpected discovery."

"Colonel Fortescue," replied Melbourne, "I am conscious that I must appear impertinent; but ——"

"It does not, however," said the Colonel, thoughtfully, "it does not lessen the serious injuries I have received from that man, that he has made the particulars of our situation a common talk—that he has engaged intercessors."

"Again,

“ Again, my dear Sir,” said Melbourne, eagerly interrupting him, “ you judge him too hastily—Davenport did not thus, he never mentioned your name to me; his story he did, but it was to vindicate himself and you, whom, though he named you not, he still loves with the tenderest friendship.”

“ I disclaim the friendship of such a villain,” said Fortescue. “ Mr. Melbourne, you are young, and Davenport is artful; I scorn to publish the imputations, the crimes under the consciousness of which he labours; but let me caution you to beware of Davenport.”

And he was going to leave Melbourne; but scarcely knowing what he did, Melbourne caught the Colonel’s arm, and said, “ Stay, I beseech you; leave me not thus hastily.”

“ You have not offended me, Mr. Melbourne,” said the Colonel, “ because I love and esteem your character; but if you knew my situation with respect to that man, if you knew all I know, your delicate mind would feel how painful it must be to me to hear of him.”

“ My

"My dear Colonel," said Melbourne, still grasping his arm, "I do know all this; and pardon me if I wish still to proceed, to probe the wound to the bottom only to heal it entirely."

"Not the most experienced surgeon could do that," replied Fortescue, shaking his head; "it may be irritated, but of cure it is incapable."

"Colonel Fortescue is too just and too generous," said Melbourne, "to retain any anger against me for my endeavours in such a cause; and if it does irritate him, I shall not——"

"Indeed, Mr. Melbourne," interrupted the Colonel, "you must excuse me—I can hear no more."

"Nor can I relinquish the point," said Melbourne; "my friend will soon be obliged to re-enter the world."

"There are others besides me," said the Colonel, "whom he has offended; what gentleman will ever condescend to associate with a coward and a swindler?"

"Davenport

"Davenport is neither, I affirm it," said Melbourne, eagerly.

The Colonel took no notice of this assertion, but proceeded:—"Let him call on his father, whose heart was broken by the misconduct of his son! let him go to those whose property he would have injured! they may forgive him; but let him not approach the man whose sister he would have ensnared! let him not remind me that to him my Arabella owes her ill health, her dreadful dejection! let him not remind me, that he, a soldier, refused to draw his sword!"

"And against whom," said Melbourne, "did he refuse to draw it? against the friend he most valued! against the brother of the woman he adored! Oh Colonel Fortescue! it requires more magnanimity in a soldier to persevere in such a refusal, than to face a whole army."

"And the dreadful infamous business, whose disclosure occasioned all that altercation—how can you defend that?"

"By

“By asserting solemnly that he was not engaged in it; that the mere proposal gave him such a shock, as entirely to detach him from the mode of life which had reduced him to such extremities.”

“Melbourne,” said the Colonel, “you are deceived; you have listened to the plausible assertions of that artful villain; and I respect the warmth and fidelity of your character too much to feel any sentiment towards you but esteem and kindness; but I entreat you, let us remain friends—tempt me no more on this subject, I shall not always bear it so patiently as I have done. My determination is taken, to have no further commerce with a villain; to drive him from my thoughts is all that is left to secure my peace, for I once loved him, Melbourne, with the tenderest friendship; I contemplated with pleasure the growing affection between him and Arabella, and I looked forward with hope. But now, look at my sister, and cease to blame my resolution; see her vivacity for ever checked! her health, perhaps,

for

for ever ruined! and can you blame my anger against the rascal who has caused these sad effects?"

"My dear Colonel," said Melbourne, "when I look at your lovely and interesting sister, I wish more than ever to shake your resolution."

"Melbourne," replied Fortescue, "propose any means of consoling my sister but the restoration of Davenport, and I will eagerly listen to you. Take upon yourself the task of comforting her, and you shall have my joyful acquiescence."

"You flatter me very highly," said Melbourne; "but the mode you reject is perhaps the only one that could be adopted with success."

"There is one question," said the Colonel, "that I feel myself entitled to ask, and I trust you will give me a candid answer;—how came you thus minutely acquainted with my situation?"

"I will answer you candidly," replied Melbourne, "if you will listen with patience to the recital I have to make."

The

The Colonel promised attention, and Melbourne detailed with but few interruptions from his auditor, the circumstances of his first meeting with Seymour, and the mode of developement with Arabella. Colonel Fortescue seemed much affected during the relation, and when it was ended, left Melbourne abruptly, but not without cordially pressing his hand, as he thanked him for his sincerity.

Left in uncertainty as to the success of his attempt, Melbourne wandered for hours on the sands, ruminating on every word that had passed, and ended, with resolving not to mention any thing of the business to Davenport, while it remained in its present undecided state.

CHAP. XVI.

A NEW FRIEND.

THE moment Melbourne re-entered the house, Arabella, who had been eagerly waiting his return, flew to him, and in a hurried voice, said, "I saw you walking with my brother, Mr. Melbourne."

Melbourne replied, with some hesitation, that he had had a long conversation with him on the interesting subject then in her mind, but that nothing decisive had passed. Miss Fortescue's eyes sparkled with joy; "Oh Mr. Melbourne!" she exclaimed, "could I have dared to hope so much? have you, indeed, brought my brother to a state of indecision?"

"I can-

"I cannot now," said Melbourne, "recite to you the particulars of our conference, but I fear, dear Miss Fortescue, there is not much foundation for the hope you express. Colonel Fortescue seems, indeed, very much irritated against my unhappy friend."

"But he endured the conversation," said Arabella, "and till this day never has he suffered his name to be mentioned to him. He has not quarrelled with you for undertaking the defence of that unfortunate man? Ah! Mr. Melbourne, how much I am indebted to you! If ever my brother should relent, shall I not always remember that it is to you I owe my happiness? for that, I must confess, is inseparably bound up with my success on this subject."

Here the entrance of Colonel Fortescue prevented Melbourne's reply; his cheek was more highly coloured than usual, yet he spoke to his sister with his accustomed gentleness, and to Melbourne with a friendliness of manner that delighted Arabella, who drew from it the happiest auguries of future felicity.

In a few minutes they were joined by the rest of the party, and the conversation became general. Yet, in the course of the evening, the Colonel drew Melbourne apart, and said, "What you have laid before me, Mr. Melbourne, has deeply affected me. I shall neither forget your arguments nor your pleadings, and be assured that however my opinion respecting Davenport may finally settle, I shall ever remember, with admiration and esteem, the warmth and magnanimity with which you espoused his cause."

"Such an assurance from Colonel Forester," replied Melbourne, "is highly flattering to me; but I hope that since he has admitted a degree of indecision with respect to my unfortunate friend, the event will be ultimately favourable to him."

"For your sake, Mr. Melbourne," said the Colonel, "I will enquire further into this business; I will search it to the bottom. I do not believe you would embark lightly in such a cause, and if I find that I have wronged Davenport, I shall consider myself

as

as the aggressor, and be ready to make atonement."

Tears of joy rushed into Melbourne's eyes; he took Colonel Fortescue's hand, and pressing it with the energy natural to his character, said, "I have then no fear for the event. My friend will be restored to the blessings he has lost, and Colonel Fortescue will render justice to his worth; he will again fold to his heart one of the firmest, tenderest ——"

His voice faltered, and the Colonel replied, "Poor Davenport! I believe he did——I——"

The arch eyes of Mrs. Greville cut short the eloquent speech the Colonel had begun, and Melbourne was too well satisfied with what he had obtained, to be very anxious to have it concluded. With a heart lightened by the consciousness of virtuous exertion, and with eyes beaming with the internal satisfaction he felt, Melbourne took a seat opposite to Arabella, (next to her he could not, both sides being occupied) and tried to make her comprehend, by his looks, the happiness

he enjoyed; yet fearful of making her believe that her felicity was permanently established, he threw from time to time such a pathetic cast into his countenance, that Arabella knew not what to conjecture, and no opportunity occurring of speaking to her, they parted for the night in very different frames of mind—Arabella, anxious, uneasy, and rather inclined to fear than to hope; Melbourne, ever sanguine, hoping his friend's felicity and that of Arabella were now decided.

The following morning completely separated the party. Melbourne returned with his friends to the elegant retirement they had quitted on account of Lord George's health, while Colonel and Miss Fortescue remained yet longer at the sea-side, so that all opportunity for further conference with the Colonel, or explanation with Arabella, was at an end. Melbourne, however, now thought seriously of visiting Mr. Searle, and of resuming his theological studies; and as his friend's health and happiness seemed now established on the firmest foundation, he sought an interview with Lord George, and informed

informed him of his resolution. Lord George once more attempted to combat his purpose, but finding him decided, wished him all possible success, acknowledging that there was no time to lose. Lady Susan saw Melbourne depart with the sincerest regret; she considered him as a tender brother, affectionately interested in her welfare, and she did justice to the feelings of his heart. Mrs. Greville would have lost his society with more reluctance, had it not been for her late acquaintance with Colonel Fortescue, who had certainly met her advances with more apparent gratitude than Melbourne had ever shewn her; and Melbourne himself, though he quitted with pain a society and mode of life in which he had been cherished and at his ease, yet felt a consciousness of acting right, and a happiness at the thought of again embracing Mr. Searle, that far overbalanced all temporary sorrow.

He found that worthy and excellent man most comfortably established at Mayfield; and highly approving of his determination, im-

mediately to return to Cambridge. The short period devoted to his stay at Mayfield, convinced Mr. Searle that his apprehensions for the heart and morals of his pupil were groundless; and that however passion might for a moment have blinded him to the force of worthier principles, and led him to shelter himself under the fantastic laws of worldly honour, yet they still retained their power over him, and promised to influence the whole of his future life. Mr. Searle told his pupil the annual sum it would be convenient to him to spare. "Of this sum, my dearest Melbourne," said he, "a part must go to form a small fund for my Mary, in case she should survive me, a circumstance of which I think there is but little probability; her declining health, and altered appearance convince me that I shall soon lose my faithful and amiable companion. For myself I shall grieve;—for her what reason will there not be to rejoice, for when did a purer spirit inhabit a mortal frame? This, however, has led me from my purpose, which

which was to tell you, that within the bounds of the remaining sum, small as it is, my Henry must endeavour to confine his expences; it will procure him what is necessary, and what is superfluous I trust he has the magnanimity to despise. It is better employed in this manner to enable him to act for himself, than were it to accumulate till my death, and then ——”

“ My dear, dear Sir,” interrupted Melbourne, whose gushing tears would scarcely permit him to articulate, “ say no more, I beseech you; your Henry knows he must not dispute your intended bounty; and for the kind, the judicious appropriation of it, receive his best, his warmest thanks.”

The business thus settled, Melbourne was anxious to establish himself at Cambridge, that he might sooner be able to provide for himself, and restore to Mr. Searle the annual sum which would procure him, who had so long been accustomed to the strictest economy, so many additional accommodations. Miss Searle had never recovered her long

illness at Linwood, but was now, in consequence of it, fallen into a gradual decay, which threatened a fatal termination. She was wholly altered; yet her heart and affections remained the same, and though she could no longer converse with her brother, nor interest herself as formerly in his favourite pursuits, her sunken eyes gleamed with pleasure when he entered the chamber where she was almost wholly confined, and she shewed a fondness for Melbourne as warm, as much alive, as in the days of her health and enthusiasm. Melbourne deplored this change, and could not but allow that it would be a subject of rejoicing for her, when her complaints should draw to a final close.

After a short and melancholy visit therefore, at Mayfield, Melbourne returned to Cambridge, where he found a succession of youths to whom he was a stranger, and who looked on him as superannuated. His business, however, now was to study, not to form friendships with the young men, and he tolerably speedy com-

pletion of his intentions. In addition to his former residence there, three terms were sufficient to qualify him for holy orders; and he determined to obtain all the advantage that intense application could give him in that period. His hours of relaxation were devoted, as formerly at Linwood, to long rambles on foot, accompanied only by one of the poets, to whom he was as partial as ever; and though he was thought a very stupid dog by the rest of the Cantabs, he felt happy in pursuing with such perseverance the path that was to lead him to independence.

One fine morning that he had rambled forth as usual, to enjoy the freshness of the autumnal breezes, as he entered a little wood, where he was wont to wander, he was overtaken by a young man of nearly his own age, and who was following the same plan. This young man, whose name was Howard, Melbourne had often noticed with some degree of interest; and though sorry to be disturbed in the enjoyment of a solitary ramble by the

intrusion of any one, he yielded with less reluctance to Howard's proposal of accompanying him, than he would have done to any one else, and was insensibly won over, by the charms of his conversation, to rejoice in the meeting. Howard was a young man of good family, though small fortune; and there was no doubt of his obtaining very good church preferment, even were he less assiduous in qualifying himself for it; but he was attached to his profession from choice as well as prudence, and seemed ambitious of becoming a worthy minister. He loved learning of all kinds, and was as great an enthusiast as Melbourne in poetry;—so far the parallel was exact; but from this point diverging lines carried them every moment further from each other. Melbourne united to the vivacity and fire of youth, the easy polish of elegant society: Howard, though his conversation recommended itself by its intrinsic sense, by its odd vein of humour, and inexhaustible resources of entertainment, had no pretensions to the manners of a gentleman.

With

With a handsome face, he disfigured a good person, by a slouch in his gait, and an almost studied slovenliness in his dress;—to cleanliness he was totally indifferent; and even to language, though his exercises and occasional writings were classically elegant and correct, yet in common conversation he was totally inattentive. He was of an ardent temper, uncontrouled by judgment, and was therefore perpetually involved in difficulties, which, however, became in his hands sources of amusement. His talents were universal, but his predominant taste was music;—in this delightful science he was indeed such a proficient, and such an enthusiast, that it had often preserved him from engagements of more hazard, and had sometimes precipitated him into difficulties of a most serious kind. Howard was an universal favourite with the young men, and even the graver seniors could not resist the charm of his conversation, perpetually replete with variety and entertainment, though they deplored that with so good a head, he should

be so unsettled, so ripe for mischief. Such was the young man who now joined Melbourne; and though till now they had never been particularly acquainted, the points of similarity between them led them hastily towards intimacy. The conversation fell on poetical and literary subjects, and as Howard was perfectly competent to speak on them, and as their tastes exactly coincided, Melbourne thought the usual suffrage passed on him, that he was a sad flighty young man was unfounded; particularly was he confirmed in this opinion, when leading the conversation to their future prospects, he found Howard most ardently attached to the church, and proposing for his example one of the great Dignitaries, who was famous for the exactitude with which he obeyed its institutes.

Melbourne returned home much pleased with his new friend, and in a few days their acquaintance was cemented into intimacy, and they became almost inseparable. Howard was much more universally known in the college

college than Melbourne;—indeed Melbourne had hitherto shunned society, his object being merely to qualify himself for the holy office he had determined to undertake; but led away by the irresistible hilarity of Howard, and by the charms of easy and amusing society, Melbourne quickly found himself introduced to a numerous set of young men, most of them high in rank and fortune, (for Howard, though not rich himself, was well connected in the world). Among these new associates there were scarcely any who came to college with any other view than to complete the necessary course of education for a man of fashion; they loitered away the day at different coffee-houses, formed a thousand plans of expence and dissipation, and not only abhorred study themselves, but exhausted all their stores of ridicule on those who devoted their time to it. Howard had the happy knack of appearing as idle as themselves; ever ready to join in any frolic, he was never deterred either by the necessity of application, or by the difficulty

culty of finding money. With this latter article he was liberally, though secretly, supplied by a cousin of his, a young Baronet, who was of all their parties; and as Howard sacredly kept the secret, Melbourne, who knew that his annual stipend was not much superior to his own, wondered how he was able to join in all those expensive frolics from which he resolutely withdrew himself. It was with great pain he bore the shafts of raillery with which all his new companions perpetually assailed him; so painful, indeed, was the contest between his fortitude and his feelings, that nothing but his increasing friendship for Howard, with whom it was impossible to live on terms of indifference, would have dragged him into societies where he had so much to encounter. One day he had been for hours listening to Howard's music, of which, though not himself a performer, Melbourne was enthusiastically fond, when they were interrupted by the entrance of Sir Percival Bamford (Howard's cousin), Lord William Arundel, and Lord Aubrey de

de Vere. "Come, Howard!" exclaimed Sir Percival, "I am come to fetch thee to spend the evening with us. We are going to arrange a party for a famous subscription ball, to be given next Monday night, and thou art such a famous dancer, thou must be one of us."

"Nay, faith," said Howard, jumping up from the instrument, where the moment before he had been entranced with delight, "though I detest a ball, I'll positively go with you now, and we'll have a merry evening—ha! Melbourne, won't we?"

"You must excuse me," said Melbourne; "I must return home; I am particularly engaged."

"What, to Thomas Aquinas?" exclaimed Lord William; "Melbourne's engagements are all of that musty nature."

"Aye, by the Lord Harry," cried Howard, "I am sure it's no more than that, for 'tis not ten minutes ago he promised to spend the whole evening here; so you're my property."

perty you know, Melbourne, and I command you to accompany us."

Lord Aubrey de Vere took one of Melbourne's arms, and Howard seized the other; Sir Percival Bamford led the van, and Lord William Arundel brought up the rear; and in this manner, in spite of Melbourne's excuses, they proceeded to Sir Percival's rooms, where finding himself housed beyond resistance, he thought it best to comply with a good grace; and reflecting that his indiscretions had not been frequent, he lent himself to the mirth of the company, and the natural vivacity of his temper soon rendered him as merry as the rest.

Led on by the gaiety of his companions, Melbourne forgot his prudent habits, and by more frequent libations to Bacchus than he was accustomed to, lost all the uneasy reflections that at first assailed him. His characteristic cheerfulness endeared him to his new associates, and without much difficulty they obtained his promise to be of the ball party. The evening passed without
other

other ill effects than a greater degree of exhilaration than usual; and though the following morning's head-ache rather led him to regret his engagement to the Monday's ball, yet he dared not expose himself to the ridicule he was certain his gay companions would lance at him, were he now to seek to retract his promise. He comforted himself, however, by the reflection that a ball was a very decent kind of dissipation, and determined to devote the interval to severer studies than common, in order to atone for the unusual relaxation. His head, however, was just now too much confused to allow him to study with any good effect, and he found it necessary to seek relief in the open air, promising to repair by evening, or even midnight vigils, the lassitude of the morning. Forth from his chamber then, overcome with languor, and something assailed by spleen, sauntered Melbourne; and as he compared his present sensations with those joyous emotions with which he usually hailed the pure breath of Heaven - he internally said,

"Thus heavily and speedily do I pay the tax of intemperance! Ah! shall not this painful lesson teach me to avoid it in future?"——

This rational soliloquy was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of the four young men with whom he had passed the preceding evening, and who rallied him severely on his pale and languid looks. Sir Percival, who affected the *bon vivant*, and assumed a coarse vulgarity of manners, which he thought denoted heartiness and hospitality, with two or three oaths cursed him for a milkfop, and then shaking him boisterously by the hand, charged him not to be discouraged, for he was so pleasant a fellow, 'twould be a pity if they could not make something of him at last.

"Faith," said Lord Aubrey, "I am almost of Mr. Melbourne's mind myself; this toping and boozing is sad vulgar work, and I dare say he will be much better pleased with his amusement on Monday; a ball is infinitely

infinitely better calculated for elegant minds than a drinking match."

"Why, the dear little creatures," cried Lord William, "are engaging to be sure; but it is not every man, Aubrey, who has thy talent for amusing them. As for me, I should die of the disms in half an hour, were I confined to flatter and say soft things to them. If they are kind and willing, I'll give them kifs for kifs, and tire 'em out I warrant 'em; but thou can't talk to them in their own way, aye, and out-rattle half a score misses."

"That's not the case with Percy," rejoined Lord Aubrey; "he's as mute as a stock or a stone when he's in the company of ladies, though he is such a noisy fellow over a bottle. Deuce take it, Howard, how come you to be rather a favourite with them?"

"Nay," interrupted Sir Percival, "if Howard can make his way with the women, nobody need despair; such a dirty flover, such blunt unpolished manners, why, thou
art

art as rough as I am, Howard, and I should think thou knowest as little of lady-like conversation; tell us how thou settlest these matters?"

"Faith!" said Howard, "I can't tell how I manage; I treat them much as I treat all of you; say just what comes uppermost; and then from my being so rough, they do not expect I should talk to 'em at all; so they receive it all as a great and invaluable favour."

Melbourne, vexed to be detained by such frivolous chat, sought two or three times to get away; but Lord Aubrey de Vere, who had taken a particular fancy to him, always found means to prevent it; and poor Melbourne perceived to his sorrow that these fluttering nothings now looked upon him as entirely one of their set. The morning was thus completely loitered away, and though he resolutely shut himself up in his chambers the remaining part of the day, his attention was distracted by a thousand vague ideas; and when he laid his head on his pillow

pillow at night, a too faithful conscience accused him of broken resolutions, precious hours wasted in mere frivolity, indecision of character, irritability of feeling, soreness to ridicule, and a number of *et ceteras*, which only a mind as delicate as Melbourne's was capable of enumerating, and from the survey of which it was a long time ere he was relieved by the happy oblivion of sleep.

CHAP. XVII.

EMBARRASSMENTS.

Poor Melbourne, though pleased and amused by the gaiety of his new mode of life, yet went reluctantly to the ball, which, however, he enjoyed as much as any of the party,

party, and in his way home was obliged to promise to devote the next evening to a jolly meeting at Lord William Arundel's chambers. Lord William resided in a college at some distance from that Melbourne belonged to; and as they found there a very large party, composed of merry youths from all quarters of the University, the evening was far more riotous and noisy than that passed at Sir Percival Bamford's. For some hours Melbourne's soul sickened at the dissonant roar of laughter, as well as at the frivolous jests that excited it. He drank cautiously, willing to avoid the repentance of the following morning; but malicious Fortune had placed him within reach of Sir Percival's observation, who, with Stentorian voice, and most unmerciful ribaldry, watched and persecuted him for every omission. Far more intoxicated than before, Melbourne joined the jovial party in their way to their different abodes in a thousand acts of riot and intemperance; and was so conspicuous an actor in the gallant achievement of breaking the windows

windows of an obnoxious tradesman, who took it into his head to demand payment of his bills, that the next day his own inevitable repentance was heightened by a reprimand from the college tutor, and a threat of rustication if such riots were repeated. However it was necessary, for Howard told him so, to invite at least the intimate set to sup at his chambers; and as Melbourne had hitherto concealed the scantiness of his annual allowance, Howard had no idea of the misery to which his instructions would reduce him. Poor Melbourne, however, was not insensible to the impending mischief; he foresaw that the supper and wine would swallow up the whole of that sum which was to procure him necessaries for the remainder of the term, and the pleasure with which he had hitherto examined the state of his finances, and appropriated every guinea to its particular purpose, was now for ever at an end. Reluctance, however, yielded to etiquette; and the fear of ridicule, as a covetous quizz, if he concealed the state of his funds, and of the

the certain contempt he should meet with, if he acknowledged his poverty, prevailed on him to issue the invitations, which were cordially accepted, and the evening was passed in one uninterrupted burst of hilarity. Melbourne himself, with the desperate fortitude of a suicide, shook off all afflicting recollections, and no one, who saw the easy gaiety with which he supported the conversation, the liberal good-humour with which he entertained his friends, and the graceful earnestness with which he pushed about the bottle, would have imagined that his last guinea was swallowed up in this expensive treat. If, however, the facile affections and applause of youth could console him for his extravagance, Melbourne might be fully consoled. He was pronounced by the Baronet, and the two Lords, to be the best good fellow existing; and vows of mutual and eternal friendship were solemnized by large libations to the powers of conviviality. Melbourne, who, if he felt not for the three youths the preference he felt for Howard, was

was yet pleased with their partiality, and amused with their gaiety; answered their overtures with equal warmth, and wholly postponed all remembrance of the means by which these professions of friendship were obtained. In the sick repentance of the following morning, however, Poverty stared upon him, with gaunt eyes and hollow cheeks, and doubled all his self-remorse. How to go on for the remainder of term he knew not. To apply to Mr. Searle his heart indignantly refused; and his pride was equally unwilling to solicit Lord George Montague. The solitary comfort of independence he knew not how to relinquish, and Howard found him overwhelmed with head-ache, anxiety, and remorse. That something more than mere bodily indisposition occasioned his pale and haggard looks, Howard very easily discovered, and with the soothing of friendship drew from him the important secret—that the extravagance he had been led into had drained his pocket. Howard, though naturally compassionate,

had suffered this distress too often to deem it a serious one, and treated Melbourne's sorrow as a jest, telling him, the prudence he had hitherto observed, entitled him to outrun a little, and that he doubted not but his first extra draft would be duly honoured by his parents.

"My dear Howard," said Melbourne, "I have already told you I have no parents."

"True, true, my boy," replied Howard, "by your guardian then."

"It was with a broken voice, and a face covered with even feminine blushes, that Melbourne acknowledged to his friend the truth of his situation; but Howard still treated it all with his levity.

"Nay, nay," said he, "I am sure I have a fellow-feeling for you; for my father is as incapable to raise the wind for me, as your dry nurse, and moreover he is very stern and crabbed too, and many and many a time have I been far deeper in the mud than you are now; not only without a shilling in my pocket for present use, but all my

my next quarter in debt; yet you see I have made shift to shuffle on;—to be sure, I have a few out-standing debts now, but I shall clear them all off when I receive the great and small tythes of my Rectory. Come, come, I'll help you out.—We sup to-night at de Vere's, you know."

"No," said Melbourne, "I will join no more in parties I am so unequal to."

"Psha, nonsense," cried Howard, "if they are richer than you, boy, you have more talents than they have, and so the commerce is pretty equal. Come, Aubrey is a d—ned good-natured fellow; he'll lend you a few guineas with all his heart."

"And shall I stoop to borrow?" cried Melbourne.

"Why faith, lad," returned Howard, "it seems that you must either borrow, beg, or steal, and you must stoop lower for either of them, than for borrowing."

Melbourne owned with a sigh that this was true; and just at this instant Lord Aubrey de Vere entered to remind him of the

engagement, which, having been made amidst the roar of gaiety, he thought might have been forgotten. After this important point was settled, Howard, with his usual nonchalance, explained some part of Melbourne's wants to de Vere, who, with a laugh of perfect good-humour, liberally and readily supplied them, and de Vere and Howard went away together.

Melbourne, abashed and confounded, felt tears of indignant pride start to his eyes as he surveyed the guineas. He was now richer than before the supper, and humbled as he was, he looked forward to the moment of repayment with as much impatience as a lover waits for the day of marriage. Burning with anger against himself, the day passed in a tumult of passions, and he went with a beating heart, and a face expressive of a thousand indignant and humiliating feelings, to keep his engagement with Lord Aubrey. He luckily found that young man alone, and began a speech of thanks and apologies, which the hurry of the morning had prevented;

vented; but de Vere shook him by the hand, and assured him such things were not thought of among friends, with such a frank air of kindness, that Melbourne felt re-assured, and as no allusion was made to the transaction during the whole evening, he felt comparatively happy. Another party, however, was in contemplation, from which he would fain have excused himself, but the matter was pressed so home, it was impossible to refuse. It was a concert to be performed at some distance from Cambridge, for the benefit of a widow and two daughters, who were in distress; the young women were pretty, modest, and accomplished, and were to perform at this concert, of which they hoped the profits would enable them to get into some way of decent livelihood. Howard, as best acquainted with performers and music, was to conduct the business for them, and guineas were readily deposited in his hands for the purpose, out of which he was to defray the expenses, and remit the remainder to the distressed family. Lord Aubrey most earnestly solicited

Melbourne to belong to the party, and though that young man did it with a totally different and very liberal intention, Melbourne's jealous mind felt that he must subscribe; as to him de Vere's solicitations had the force of commands, and he cursed the moment when he forfeited his independence. The guinea however was paid, and Melbourne comforted himself as well as he could, by resolving to do severe penance for the rest of the time he had to stay at Cambridge, and resolutely to avoid all further engagements. There was yet a fortnight to elapse before the day fixed for the concert; Howard was of course much engaged, and when he was to be seen, was so lost in musical enthusiasm, that he seemed a being of another world; and Melbourne, under pretence of indisposition, kept aloof from all parties. De Vere, who really felt more than a mere every day kindness for him, called frequently; but as Melbourne's pale face, and sunken eyes, bore testimony to the reality of his illness, he contented himself with paying mere visits

of friendship, and forebore to solicit his company, though he told him he was cruelly missed by the party. The fortnight, thus rescued from dissipation, was given to intense study, and Melbourne began to recover some degree of internal satisfaction.

CHAP. XVIII.

A CONCERT.

THE day of the concert arrived; Howard, all bustle and business, had been absent from Cambridge two or three days previous to the appointed one. Melbourne accompanied Lord Aubrey de Vere and another young man in a chaise; for Sir Percival and Lord William, though they had each paid their

their guinea, relinquished the amusement, as less to their taste than the more jovial bottle.

The company was tolerably numerous, and Howard congratulated himself upon his successful exertions in favour of this distressed family. The concert gave universal satisfaction, and the voice of Miss Maria Shelley, the younger of the sisters, was perhaps more emphatically applauded because her face and person were uncommonly delicate and beautiful. Several of the gentlemen were extremely captivated with her appearance, and the modesty and elegance of her manners riveted the chains her beauty had imposed. Among the foremost of her admirers was Lord Aubrey de Vere; and Melbourne saw with regret, that this young nobleman, to whom he attributed a thousand good qualities, was going to form an attachment which must end either in disappointment to himself, or in ruin to his fair mistress. Howard's spirits were absolutely overpowering, though he played the harpsichord with uncommon brilliancy and effect.

All

All the audience were liberal in their commendations; and when the entertainment was over, and the company were chiefly retired, Lord Aubrey, who still lingered near the fair object of a new-born flame, and Melbourne, were invited by Howard to partake of a supper, to which Mrs. Shelley had retained a few friends. The invitation was eagerly accepted by de Vere, and Melbourne was much amused with the resifless gaiety, and unceasing chat of Howard. He told ten thousand amusing incidents, laughed at a hundred of his own blunders and misdemeanours, with playful vivacity, and every moment committed fresh ones, which excited new and convulsive merriment. Maria Shelley, like all the rest of the company, gave to his rattle the chief of her attention, and paid no more than a decent civility in return for the assiduous gallantry of Lord Aubrey; nor did she seem at all elated, or disposed to coquetry by the homage she received from all the beaux around. Melbourne observed, with a benevolent pleasure,

that a lovely, young, and inexperienced girl, placed in so dangerous a situation, gave every promise of conducting herself with exemplary prudence; and he rejoiced the more, because the mother and sister were mere every day people, apparently incapable of either appreciating the merits, or perceiving the danger of the lovely Maria; still less could they have taught her to avoid those rocks and quick-sands which lay in her way. Mrs. Shelley's selected friends dropped off by degrees, but the persevering Lord Aubrey still delayed to quit the fascinating Maria. Howard, taking out his pocket-book, observed that none but friends were present, and began in his usual harum scarum way, to run over the accounts; and presenting Mrs. Shelley with a handful of bank notes, told her he should still have accounts to settle with her, for he had retained some of the money till he had paid all the petty expenses, which perhaps would not be finally settled for a fortnight. Melbourne saw with respect an indignant blush (as he interpreted it)

suffuse

flushed Maria's delicate cheek while this business was settling, and he fancied that she received with more pleasurable gratitude the little attentions by which Lord Aubrey sought to prevent her dwelling painfully on the subject; yet her eye perpetually reverted to Howard, whose animated countenance beamed with uncommon pleasure; and once his quick glance turning suddenly on Maria, called a deeper glow over her whole face and bosom. Her eye in that moment met Melbourne's, and the glow heightening for an instant, was succeeded by a death-like paleness, which put Melbourne in complete possession of her secret. Nor was Lord Aubrey inattentive; he saw a part, and guessed more, and determined, if possible, to be an over-match for Howard.

When at length the young men retired to their inn, Lord Aubrey proposed to Howard and Melbourne, to make a party to London for two or three days, offering to pay all expences for the present, and let their accounts stand over till a more convenient

venient season. Howard declared it impossible he should go, as he had so many engagements with the people employed about the concert; and Melbourne positively and instantly declined the proposal. Lord Aubrey, who would have been very sorry had either of them accepted his offer, said, he would go out and enquire if any travellers were going to London, as he would get part of a chaise with them; he accordingly left the room, and not returning for a considerable time, Melbourne and Howard retired to rest.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



